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Amabeï :a family history /by Mary Elizab



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A M A B E L;

A F A M I L Y H I S T O R Y.

BY
MARY ELIZABETH WORMELEY.

Wait, and Love himself will bring
The drooping flower of knowledge changed to fruit
Of wisdom. Wait : my faith is large in Time
And that which shapes it to some perfect end.

TENNYSON.

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TO

A. E. T.

MY TRIED AND TRUE FRIEND,

This Volume

IS AFFECTIONATELY OFFERED.

AND,

IF IT POINTS THE MORAL

THAT

LOVE, THE PRINCIPLE,

INFUSED INTO OUR DUTIES WORKS ITS OWN REWARD,

TO NO ONE COULD IT BE MORE APPROPRIATELY

Inscribed.

Sonnet.

THROUGH suffering and sorrow thou hast past,
To show us what a woman true may be.
They have not taken sympathy from thee,
Nor made thee any other than thou wast ;
But like some tree which, in a sudden blast,
Sheddeth those blossoms that were weakly grown,
Upon the air, but keepeth every one
Whose strength gives warrant of good fruit at last,
So thou hast shed some blooms of gaiety,
But never one of steadfast cheerfulness ;
Nor hath thy knowledge of adversity
Robbed thee of any faith in happiness,
But rather cleared thine inner eyes to see
How many simple ways there are to bless.

JAMES RUSSEL LOWELL.

Introduction.

Lives of great men all remind us
We can make our lives sublime,
And departing, leave behind us
Footprints on the sands of time.

Footprints that perhaps another,
Sailing o'er life's solemn main,
Some forlorn and shipwrecked brother,
Seeing, shall take heart again.

H. W. LONGFELLOW.

"I DWELL amongst mine own people." The woman who can echo these words of the Shunnamite, is blessed beyond all others of her sex in her position in society.

"Amongst mine own people:" a sound of peace is in the very words. How much they seem to promise of usefulness, of happiness, of that kind sympathy and watchful consideration which are the birthright of our sex, and for the loss of which no public triumphs can bring us consolation!

Enjoyment is not happiness. Happiness has its seat in the affections. It is reserved, modest, and retiring; it never courts publicity. The triumphs of beauty, wit, or even virtue have their value, but they cannot restore tranquillity when lost; they leave the heart as lonely as they found it; they cannot take the place of considerate friends.

"I dwell amongst mine own people." Not only the living, but the dead surround me. I raise my eyes, and fix them on the portraits of the lost and loved.

At yonder mansion, half hidden by tall cedar trees, dwell my grandfather and grandmother. Since the appointment of my father to the South American station, I have lived there too; but the house is no longer what it used to be, a very fairy-land of merriment and happiness, since the boys were "cut adrift," as grandpapa expresses it, and my sweet sister Ella was married on the same day and hour as our cousin Mab.

In a few months there is to be another wedding. Edward will have come home from the coast of South America; Mab and Ella with their young and happy husbands, will return, though only for a season, to the dear old Hall; relations of all degrees of consanguinity will be gathered together by invitation; grandmamma will hold high council with her housekeeper; and grandpapa will give away another blushing bride.

But although the happy pair may seek for a short period some undisturbed retreat, the bride will continue to "*dwell* amongst her own people:" Edward has purchased this dear cottage, and has promised to instal his "wee bit wife" where she loves best to dwell; and although some few articles of modern furniture are already in preparation, he has promised to disturb no one of these dear pictures, to banish no one of these stiff-backed, uncomfortable, time-hallowed arm chairs. My dear kind Edward! . . . Shame on thee, truant goosequill! I was talking of my ancestors.

Is it possible, I ask myself, when I gaze upon their pictures, that

Such as these have lived and died,

without leaving a single trace of their being upon the tablets of time?

They were not heroes, not authors, not founders of noble houses, not renowned for their discoveries in science or in art. They were plain, every-day, matter-of-fact men and women. But are the pages of the Annual Register to be alone our passport to immortality?

I have often been led to reflect, as I sit surrounded by the portraits that adorn this little drawing-room, that there is a veil hung up between the Present and the Past, whose folds are as impenetrable as that before the Future. In the life of every one of us there is an inner sanctuary—a Holy of Holies—which the stranger may not enter, and where the footfalls of friendship are never heard. It is this veil that I now seek to draw aside from the history of my ancestors. We seldom lift it from the inner life of living friend or neighbor; but the dead!—the lessons of their experience, so far as we can gather them, are our own inheritance; and sometimes it does us good to look at life under circumstances in which its "deep things" are revealed to us; and on the chart of the experience of others, we discern the breakers, the sunk rocks, and shifting sandbanks that endanger our own course, with the Pharos of Hope kindled for us beyond.

In one respect I am ill-fitted for the task before me: my life has been full of the sunshine of happiness. Those whose history I am

to chronicle drank to the very dregs the cup of suffering ; but my path has been so fringed by the shadow of their sorrows, that I have imbibed a portion of their spirit, and have grown capable of appreciating their struggles with adversity.

Besides this, from my earliest childhood I have been familiar with the outline of this history : every spot in our sweet valley is associated with its scenes ; the old servants of the family have stimulated my curiosity, and when once interested in any vague tradition, I have only to coax grandpapa—a revealer of secrets—a Zaphnath-Paneah—and I can learn all upon the subject that he knows.

But I have a still more valuable source of information for some parts of my narrative : a manuscript that I inherit, in my father's hand. If my readers will have patience with me, I will tell them how it was that my father came to record his own autobiography in connexion with these scenes.

My parents spent their early married life abroad, my father having received a good naval appointment at one of the ports of the Mediterranean.

I was a puny, sickly, little thing, when we returned to England. My mother's health was thought precarious ; and while the doctors wished to keep her in London for advice, they strongly recommended my removal to the country.

In the afternoon of the second day's journey, my father raised my weary head from his supporting shoulder, and pointed out to me the gable end of my future English home.

We swept up the park avenue, we passed the four grand cedars ; the autumn sun was gilding gloriously the Suffolk hills beyond. The old gardeners rolling the smooth carriage way and sweeping up the leaves, stood aside, and raised their hats from their white heads as we flew by ; we turned suddenly into a flower garden, and drew up before the rose-entwined high porch of the hall door.

The family party had flown forth to welcome us. They were all in walking dresses ; all animated, happy, and as healthful as they were gay. I clung closer to my father's breast, with a feeling of helplessness and isolation. He clasped me in his arms and sprang out of the carriage.

"God bless you, Theodosius," cried my grandfather, who stood, cane in hand, the centre of a merry group of children in the doorway.

With two bounds my father sprang up the front steps, and laid me gently in my grandmother's arms.

Five children, besides myself, were in the nursery. Two were

the children of the house ; the parents of two others were at Singapore, in India ; the fifth was the daughter of aunt Annie, the wife of a lieutenant-colonel of artillery.

I hardly know why I dwell upon my first introduction to this family group, unless it be because it gives me pleasure to remember how, when they had forced me by prayers, exhortations, and caresses, to go down in my white frock, after dinner, to dessert, I was attracted by a handsome boy, about sixteen, dressed in midshipman's uniform, who took me on his knee as soon as I came in, and filled a plate with fruit for me.

"Have you been introduced all round, my child?" inquired my grandmother.

"Yes, she has," answered a sturdy little urchin, "and she won't understand how I'm an uncle to her."

"Hold your tongue, Leo. Don't worry the poor child," said the midshipman, "for Garter King himself, would be puzzled in this house to make out our consanguinity. We are all cousins. I am your cousin Ned. Mind,—never call me your great uncle!"

It was in the arms of this great uncle or cousin, that I was carried across the Park that night, for as the great house was full of guests I was to sleep with my father, at our new home—the Cottage. My father went with us, we were attended by old Maurice with a light, and I had been wrapped in shawls by the soft hands of my grandmother.

My father, on coming out into the night, shook hands with the old butler.

"Well, Maurice, my man," said he, "so at last you have brought your ship into port."

"Aye, aye, sir, so I have," replied the old sailor. "I have made fast alongside yonder craft" (shaking his lantern towards the house that we were leaving). "It is as good a berth as a sailor ought to ask till he makes sail for his last v'y'ge! And Captain,—I thought so on the night I saw her first,—that craft there sails with the figure-head of an angel!"

When Ned and Maurice left us at our cottage, I was consigned into the hands of a new maid and put to bed. But when alone in the dark room, under a heavy canopy of damask, a horror of loneliness fell upon me. In hysterical terror, I started out of bed, and guided by the light that streamed beneath a door, made my way into the sitting-room. My father, who was there alone, took me in his arms, folded his coat round me, laid my head against his breast, and, sitting down before the hearth, drew my attention to a picture. It was the simple head of a woman, beautiful, young, but with the marks of

early sorrow in the face. An expression of woe, which fascinated rather than repelled ; which made you feel that nothing that grieved you could be too trivial for her to sympathize with, and no sorrow so terrible but that she might venture with the right of sad experience to bring it balm.

A sort of holy peace stole into my heart, as I gazed on the calm eyes of the picture.

"Who is it?—who is it, dear papa?" I cried.

He answered, smiling, with a kiss, "Old Maurice told us, dearest, who it was. It is our guardian angel."

Two years ago, after my mother's death, when our dear father, broken by his grief, had applied for and obtained a ship on the South American Station, we again returned together across the Park, from a family dinner at the Hall. Maurice, the old butler, escorted us with his lantern, and at my side was cousin Ned. Let not the reader think he was really my great uncle, for our marriage was arranged.

When Ned and Maurice had departed, my father sat down before the hearth, and, having drawn a low stool near, I placed myself at his feet.

"Father, have you no last instructions for your daughter?"

He was gazing earnestly at the picture.

"You will fulfil your dear mother's last wishes, and my hopes, if you are just like *her*."

"Father, you always say *like her*—and *now*—now I know that she is perfect, but was she so at my age? I have heard" . . .

"What?"

"Strange things."

My father rose up ; opened a desk and took out some papers.

"Your mother wished you to know this," said he,—"*I would that every person old and young in England, knew this history, my child, and learned its lesson. You need it less than many, but there are those who cannot see their way through life, and it might teach : that Love—I do not mean Love the Passion, but Love the Principle—infused into our duties, works its own reward. There may be often the passion of love without this lovingness, but alone it never lasts long. People wonder sometimes they are not made happy by their duties ; it is because they are performed from some other motive than love. And there is another mistake that people make, my child. They ascribe different origins to this love ; but it is self-begetting. Nothing produces it in others' hearts but its manifestation in our*

own. We can neither lay claim to it, command it, nor compel it. It exists as between man and man independently of relationship. Only the Christian has, with respect to it, a peculiar privilege. He has the advantage of the initiative. With him it springs from God's love, and love to God in him; and it is his privilege to call it forth in the hearts of others."

The papers were in three parts. The first was a manuscript, labelled by my father "*Doctor Glascock's Narrative.*" Doctor Glascock had been Inspector of our hospitals in Malta, and, in answer to some inquiries made in 1819, by my father, wrote down his reminiscences of Amabel during her early life, and in the years 1809-10.

The second manuscript was a long letter addressed by Amabel, herself, to Captain Warner.

The third was a narrative of my father's own acquaintance with that lady, commenced that very night when he first brought me to my English home.

The story fascinated me. I could not forget my father's wish "that every person in England knew this tale and learned its lesson." Impelled by the interest I took in what I read, I passed many hours in rewriting the history; making extracts here and there from my authorities; but the language and arrangement are my own.

A fourth part I have supplied from my remembrance, and as I have already said from other sources.

It is little the concern of any reader why, after rewriting the story solely to amuse myself, I have eventually been induced to publish it. It is given to the world with the full consent of my own family. My grandfather even ventured to suggest, some few days since, a sentence from the Catechism as its appropriate motto—"And do my duty in that state of life to which it may please God to call me."

"Very true, but not exactly appropriate," was my answer. "The moral of my tale is *love*. And my father would have told us that the cold round of duty, without love to season it, is very unsatisfactory to all parties, dear grandpapa."

Part First.

DRAWN MAINLY FROM DR. GLASCOCK'S WRITTEN
NARRATIVE.

Strong is the life that nestles there,
But into motion and delight
It may not burst, till soft as air
It feels Love's brooding timely might;
Lyra Innocentium.

AMABEL; A FAMILY HISTORY.

P A R T I.

CHAPTER I.

. English air ;
For there is nothing here
Which from the outward to the inward brought,
Moulded thy baby thought.—TENNYSON.

“It appears to me,” says my father in one portion of his narrative, “that in our ordinary estimate of individual character, we seldom give sufficient weight to the influences that have formed it.

“A family is established :—the opinions and character of the parents determine the nature of its associates, and give it its general tone. As one by one the children increase in years and understanding, each infuses somewhat of his peculiar tastes and disposition into the social circle. It has its gaieties—for they are young ; its interests—for they are many ; its sorrows—for they come to all ; its relative duties ; its experiences ; its anniversaries ; its sympathies ; its fears. The youthful mind is formed under these influences ; it is not exposed to receive its impressions rudely from the world without, but learns at first to look on all things in a sort of family light. By degrees the permanent family character has been formed ; and it sends forth its members, each with the family impress, to take up their positions in the world.

“But who is there, that looking round amongst his acquaintance makes sufficient allowance for the nature of the family influence which has acted on each mind ? Who is there, for example, who when passing judgment upon the faults or weaknesses of a young and inexperienced woman,—beautiful perhaps, and exposed to every snare of vanity ;—enthusiastic, and therefore open to every temptation of an ill-regulated fancy—will suffer the words of condemnation to die unuttered on his

lips, and plead for this young girl before the many that accuse her, that she never knew the counsels of a mother?

“A mother’s love! It is the ægis of her children. Who can estimate its influence in a family of love?”

This is not in truth the moral of my story, but these reflections seem to have been called forth from my father by an allusion to the early years of its heroine, Amabel de Karnac.

Yes; *heroïne* I called her, for like my father, I have little sympathy with those who think that heroism went out of date together with chain armor.

She was born at the close of the eighteenth century, at the last place in the world one would have fixed on for the production of a heroine, a low, close, miserable lodging near the gates of Deptford Dockyard.

Her father, Louis Marie Amable de Karnac, was a Viscount and an *émigré*.

The opening of the Revolution found him in Paris, one of those mere men of day—those star-spangled court dangles—who, caring for nothing but their privileges as members of an aristocracy, passed into foreign countries on the first signal of popular insurrection, intending, when all was settled, to return triumphant from their voluntary exile, to reap the pleasant fruits that other hands had sown, and to exult over the discomfiture of rebellion and of anarchy, which men of another stamp had encountered and put down.

This was the more disgraceful in the Viscount because he came from Brittany; a province which, up to the time of the Revolution, was full of country gentlemen living on their estates surrounded by their peasantry; unconnected with general politics, or with the intrigues of the court, to which, indeed, they were traditionally hostile since the annexation of the Province, three hundred years before, to the French crown.

The Viscount had the acquaintance of certain men of influence in England, who, as the French emigration increased, and claims upon their patronage grew numerous, provided for him, by procuring him the situation of teacher of French at Blackheath in a young ladies’ school; probably considering that if a Marquis could keep a cook’s shop in Oxford street in the days of his misfortunes, a Viscount might be well content to

drag the youthful intellect through *Télémaque*, and the four regular conjugations of French verbs.

But the situation, though not dishonorable, was not a lucrative one, and the Viscount was willing to exchange advantages. He took an early opportunity of making love to one of his pupils, reported to possess a small amount of private fortune. English beauty is always attractive to a foreigner, and the heiress had enough of it to enhance the value of her gold. They eloped at the close of a school ball, and before the alarmed preceptress could convey intelligence of the event to Miss Lane's family, she had united her fortunes to those of the Viscount, and no remedy remained for the evil done.

The event, so far from improving the young Viscount's position, deprived him of the bare subsistence he had hitherto enjoyed. It turned out that Miss Lane's little fortune, till she was twenty-one, was not in her own power. Her father, willing that she should reap for a time the fruits of her own folly, refused to contribute to her support, or to extend to her his forgiveness; the Viscount lost the countenance of his English patrons, who were not ill pleased to have an excuse for getting rid of him; no careful mother would receive him as French teacher in her family; while to complete their misfortunes his only sister Louise, who had been receiving her education in a convent in Brittany, barely escaping with life and reason from the destruction of her asylum, was, by the fidelity of one of her father's old retainers, brought over into England, to add to the number of those who must be fed from money raised at an enormous interest upon *Madame de Karnac's* future fortune.

In the midst of all this poverty and anxiety, Amabel de Karnac came into the world. The very necessities of her situation were procured for the young mother by the exertions of Louise, who, oppressed by the idea that she entailed a burden on the family, worked early and late to meet her share of the expenses, procuring a coarse and precarious employment from a marine store, nearly opposite to their windows in Deptford.

As she went backwards and forwards to this establishment, for the purpose of returning work or of obtaining it, she was

quite unconscious that a lover's eyes were on her, till one evening, a few days after the birth of her brother's baby, the master of the marine store having invited her into his back parlor, seized the opportunity of declaring his passion, and of setting before her a full account of his late pecuniary successes as a government contractor.

Poor, pale Louise! As soon as she understood him, she broke away from the rash store-keeper, and covering her face with her little neat black apron, darted through the shop to the astonishment of customers, and never stopped till, in the little closet that she called her chamber, she fell upon her knees beside her bed, weeping passionately and long. Her admirer was not discouraged by this conduct. He gave her what he supposed a sufficient time to recover herself, and to explain all that had passed between them to her brother, and then, eager and impatient, he took up his hat and went across the street to honor the young Viscount with a call.

The astonishment of de Karnac at his proposal was equal to the measure of his family pride; but, by degrees, he saw the thing more reasonably. He reflected on his own position, and remembered that the marriage of a female in a foreign land with a rich *negociant Anglais* would scarcely mar the glories of his family tree.

I never heard any one talk of the character of the Viscount, but he must have been an eminently selfish man, although he looks so speciously handsome in the miniature likeness now hanging on the wall beside me, for, before the store-keeper departed from his presence, he had arranged that if the shop were given up, and a handsome marriage settlement made upon his sister, he would use his influence to bring her over to their views.

Louise had passed all her life in the seclusion of her convent, or in the almost equal retirement of her father's lands in Brittany; her little fluttering heart was yet entirely free, and she had always looked upon a *mariage de convenance* as her natural destiny. Like all French girls, however, she had trusted to the affection of her friends to make a choice likely to be agreeable to her; yet, when her brother spoke to her on the subject

—when he laid before her reasons bearing less upon her happiness than on his own, he found her resigned and yielding, and in less than a fortnight after the proposal, Louise de Karnac, the descendant of a long line of Breton ancestors, became the wife of the store-keeper Sibbes.

The next event that happened in the Karnac family was scarcely more of a tragedy than such a wedding. Poor, pale Louise, who every day grew paler, passed much of her time in her late home, her brother's lodgings, where, pressing to her heart his little baby, she at least felt that her feelings and her prejudices were not rudely ruffled by the bluff, vulgar *bonhomie* of Mr. Sibbes.

She was thus employed one evening, when a sailor was suddenly shown in, who with such preparation as a kind, rough nature could suggest, informed the ladies that the Viscount de Karnac had taken a boat at the Tower Stairs to row down to Deptford; that a collier coming up the river had run down the little wherry; that it had turned over upon the unfortunate Viscount, and that before he could be got out of the water he was drowned.

Though Madame de Karnac had ceased to love her husband, though she reproached him daily with having deceived her into an unhappy marriage, and although at the very moment when the sad news reached her, she was engaged in pouring a long tale of his delinquencies into his sister's ear, she was not the less vehement in her grief, not the less helpless as she shrieked forth her lamentation. Louise had her immediately removed to her own cottage, and Mr. Sibbes took on himself all the arrangements for the inquest and the funeral. He easily persuaded Madame de Karnac, after the first paroxysm of her despair was over, to write to her own family, and in a few hours her father arrived to take charge of her. He made no offer to attend the obsequies of the Viscount, or to share the funeral expenses. He only inquired after his liabilities; was shocked and indignant at the inroads made in the young wife's fortune; and as soon as possible departed, taking with him the widow and her little girl.

Louise, as she watched the departure of the carriage, burst

into a passion of weeping. She felt that the last tie that connected her present existence with the past had just been severed, and that henceforward she was to be nothing more than the wife of Mr. Sibbes. The next intelligence she received of Madame de Karnac was through the medium of a newspaper, which reported her approaching marriage with a gallant naval officer.

Louise glanced at her own black dress, and again wept long and bitterly. At length a thought occurred to her; Mr. Sibbes had always sought to gratify her wishes; what if she should entreat him to adopt her brother's orphan as their own! It was with an impatience she had never felt before to see her husband, that she awaited his return. She had full confidence in the power she had never yet cared to exert over him, and she broached the subject eagerly before he had stepped across the threshold of his door.

Her enthusiasm had lost sight of opposition to her wishes, and she was both surprised and angry to discover that her proposition was met by Mr. Sibbes with coldness. He did not approve of meddling with other people's children he told her; the Viscount had been much expense to him already; and Madame de Karnac he especially abhorred.

"Say what remains when hope is fled?
She answered—endless weeping."

And the character of Louise must have resembled that of the mother of the Boy of Egremont, for though excited into energy by the approach of care or danger, since all hope of ameliorating her condition had forsaken her, she had become gradually almost weak in mind.

Mr. Sibbes was not a man of strong sensibilities; he could not understand her sufferings, but he was made uncomfortable by tears. He arose early in the morning, went down by coach to the country-seat of Mr. Lane, saw the young widow in gay half-mourning listening to the pleasant nothings of Captain Talbot, her intended; and after some negotiation struck a bargain with little Amabel's grandfather. The terms of which were, first, that the Sibbeses should have the entire charge and

care of the child. Secondly, that in consideration of the honor thence devolving upon him, Mr. Sibbes should furnish little Amabel with a handsome marriage portion, or settle an equivalent upon her should he die. A third proviso was added by the grandmother; that she should not be brought up in the Roman Catholic religion.

She was a model of childish beauty; but had she been deformed and ugly Mr. Sibbes would not have cared. He had obtained her solely to gratify his sad and sickly wife, and he was more than repaid for his diplomacy and trouble, when as the post-chaise stopped before his house Louise came forth to meet them.

"Here is your niece, my dear wife," he said, kindly.

Louise extended her arms, but it was to throw them around him; her first kiss was for her husband, and her second for the child.

It would have been a pleasant thing to state that this act of considerate kindness brought health back to her cheek and happiness to their home. But it was not so. Louise's mental and moral powers had been irremediably weakened, and she sank, by slow yet steady stages, into childish imbecility. It was a happy imbecility, however; the child became her playmate, alternately assuming the ascendancy from her superior energy of character, or looking up to the enlarged physical powers of her aunt, with respect and admiration.

Often as Mr. Sibbes must in after years have regretted his unwise ambition in his marriage, he never repented his adoption of the child.

Though the mother of Amabel had protested, that unless allowed to see her often, she could not part with "her angel—her sweet love," it chanced, that in the excitement and bustle which succeeded her gay wedding with Capt. Talbot, she found little leisure or inclination for renewing her intercourse with Mr. and Mrs. Sibbes; and an occasional note or message of inquiry, left by her gaudy footman at the little house in Deptford, alone proved to her late husband's relations that she had not yet forgotten his child.

When, however, she was established in a country house,

after her third London season, and had begun to think of demanding a visit from her little daughter, she received notice of the intended removal of the family to Malta. Mr. Sibbes had made large speculations as a Levant merchant; his wife's health required a milder air; and, with lurking irony, the ex-dealer in marine stores ventured to hope, that Lady Karnac (she chose to be called thus, though the wife of Captain Talbot) would not object to so wide a separation from her little girl. This letter lay unanswered till Mr. Sibbes and his party had left England: and from that time, Amabel's communications with her mother were very "few and far between."

Like a garden flower, sown by chance in the corner of a field, which, beautiful in wild luxuriance, excites regret that it has not been cultivated and trained; so, Bella Karnac (as it was usual to call her) continued to grow up in Malta, a very different person from the proper model of lady-like deportment which every careful mother sets before her child.

There is this important difference between our moral and intellectual faculties. "The former," says a great Review, (which, my father used to observe, sounds like a "lead line," the spirit of our times), "cannot be accustomed to discipline too early, that they may receive their bent in time; but there is danger of weakening or disturbing the intellectual powers, if we interfere too soon with their free growth." Bella's moral training came from the circumstances of her position. Hers was no artificial nursery and school-room existence, requiring artificial checks, excitements, and emulations; she was at once thrown upon all the realities, and assumed some of the responsibilities, of actual life. Her faults brought their own punishment; the angles of her disposition were forced to accommodate themselves to circumstances. This, which would have led to artifice and cunning had she been struggling for freedom in an artificial state of society, made her fearless, light-hearted, and trustful, in her actual position.

Her aunt was weak in health, as we have seen, and still more weak in mind; whilst Mr. Sibbes, who was engaged in business and often absent on long voyages, paid no more attention to the moral and intellectual training of his niece than to

the moral and intellectual training of her puppy. Save in mutual offices of kindness she was perfectly independent of every one around her, and her heart was too loving not to strengthen hourly this grateful tie. That she was wilful and independent was the worst that could be said of her; and wilfulness and independence, *properly directed*, form, under other names, with other combinations, the elements of much that is noble, wise, and beautiful in character.

CHAPTER II.

Three years she grew in sun and shower
Then nature said—"A lovelier flower
On earth was never sown,
This maiden for my own I take
She shall be mine, and I will make
A lady of my own."—WORDSWORTH

THE windows of the house, or rather flat, which Mr. Sibbes occupied in Valetta, looked out upon the grass-plot behind the castle of St. Elmo, at that time the place where French prisoners were confined. Here Bella daily played before the grate through which they were permitted to hold intercourse with the townspeople, who came at certain hours to buy the little works they carved in wood and bone. Grey veterans leaning on the sill of this barred window would tell her endless stories of *la belle France*—of their battles and campaigns. As they warmed in their recital they constantly forgot that a mere child was their listener, and would tell her all that lay upon their hearts, tales of their families, their early loves, their homes, their generals, their camps and comrades, wrongs and hatreds, hopes, and griefs, and fears. They looked upon little Amabel as a French child and a prisoner. Even the most republican amongst them pardoned her father's nobility and emigration, in delight at the national sympathies she evinced towards the land that they had taught her to reverence and to love.

When Amabel was seven years of age there was landed on

the island a young French midshipman, taken prisoner by the boats of a British man of war on the neighboring coast of Calabria. The authorities, taking pity on the little fellow's youth, allowed him to go at large about the city. He took at first no pleasure in his liberty, but kept in sight of his fellow-prisoners in the Castle, walking silently and listlessly backwards and forwards, along the edge of the fortifications, endeavoring to exchange the impulses of childhood for a stern and solemn sense of his position. But Bella on the third day succeeded in attracting his attention; on the fourth she ventured to offer him *confetti*; on the fifth, they were seated in an angle of the wall of the old fortress, busily engaged in playing *mora*, and very soon they were away together on the wharves, where Bella made her young companion known to her friends the fishermen.

All little girls who play with little boys, resigning the conventional privileges of their sex, are content to follow admiringly, and sometimes on bare sufferance, the lead of the bolder party. The superiority of Felix in strength and age and practical attainment was the ground of little Amabel's excessive admiration. Later in life we want some one to sympathize with us, in childhood we are content with being permitted to sympathize.

Bella brought her young companion home to Aunt Louise, who melted into tears the first time she heard the accent with which he spoke. He was a compatriot of hers—a Bas-Breton. His father was a wealthy shipowner at Roscoff, who had made large purchases of landed property during the Revolution. Amongst his acquisitions was a part of the estate of the old family of De Karnac; and Felix, not Amabel, had been brought up in the old *Château*.

After a brief happiness of two months came tidings of the Peace of Amiens. The French prisoners in Valetta were ordered to embark for their own home. Amabel followed her playmate to the water's edge, following and weeping like Phaltiel the son of Laish in the train of his wife Michal when reclaimed by David. She crept up to his side as he stood waiting for the boat on the verge of the Marina, lifting her tearful face for that last kiss which he, an officer surrounded by

his men, was half ashamed to give. She saw the boat push off and near the vessel which was to carry back the prisoners to their own gay land, and as her white sails lessened in the distance poor little Bella's tears fell fast. Nor was it till six or eight months afterwards, that her grief for the loss of Felix Guiscard was dispersed by the acquisition of another friend. This friend was Doctor Glascock; from his pen came almost all the details I can give of this portion of our story. He arrived in Malta as Inspector of the Hospitals, immediately after the rupture of the Peace of Amiens. At the commencement of the Revolution he had caught the epidemic fever of the mind;—the gospel according to Jean Jacques was his religion; and he dreamed under its influence, the approaching overthrow of superstition and of tyranny, and Utopian felicity for all the human race.

Surge after surge, the rolling waves of public opinion continued to advance, and bore him onward, until the sceptre of Napoleon was stretched over its waters:—the tide turned and left him deserted on the shore. He despaired thenceforth of liberty, and turned the bitterness of his bold irony against human nature, which he thought had disappointed him. He became a misanthrope because all men were not philanthropists. He hated his fellow-creatures because they wanted love!

At this stage of his mental history his friends procured him his appointment, and Government, which in those days had its eyes on individuals, was nothing loath to exile one who fraternized with Cartwright to a place so loyal as the little isle of Malta, where the British population, naval and military, looked upon a man who read the Edinburgh Review as scarcely capable of loyal service to his Majesty; and the Declaration of Rights, which the Doctor hung framed and glazed over his fire-place, as a code of opinions only adapted to a community of bandits, subversive alike of civilization, religion, loyalty, and honor.

On the grassy ground behind the Castle, Dr. Glascock noticed Bella Karnac the first time that he went into the Prison Hospital. She had climbed up the rough wall, inserting her tiny fingers and her feet in the interstices of the mortar, till

she could hang in safety by the iron bars of a window, supported by the arms of a rough French soldier. When Dr. Glascock came in sight he let her down, putting into her hand at the same time some little article of his own manufacture. She ran up to the Doctor, in whom she hoped the trifle of her friend would find a purchaser, but as she caught the expression of his face, the little air of confidence she had assumed vanished, and she turned timidly away.

"Humph," said the Doctor, "catching fleas and fevers; pestering the public with that trumpery! Modern charity puts a new sense on the old adage. Sending its agents abroad to pick its neighbor's pocket, it enjoys its happy idleness comfortably at home."

But in the course of his professional visits he made many inquiries about the child amongst the English ladies of the garrison. In answer he heard discussed the probable wealth of the old merchant who was her uncle and protector, his obscure origin, his rise in life, the health and circumstances of his wife, and the future prospects of the little girl.

"My good ladies," said the Doctor in his turn, "there is no melancholy fact on earth but has its uses. Miserable children who grow up as you describe, without the artificial restraints you impose in education, serve to gauge the advantages your daughters must enjoy."

One lady told him that as the child spoke French, she had been anxious to secure her as a companion to her daughters, and would have been willing to have her with them in the school-room, but her tastes were so low, and she had so large an acquaintance, which she could not be made to relinquish, amongst the prisoners of St. Elmo, and the fishermen and fruitwomen of Valetta, that to reclaim her was impossible.

All this jumped with the Doctor's humor, and he made advances the next morning to little Amabel, on the grass plot of the Castle. She followed him about after a short time, and served him as interpreter. She accompanied him in all his walks and to the houses of his patients, waiting for him at the doors. Children find out where their company is welcome, and a loving heart can always accommodate itself to character.

Little Bella rarely ventured to converse with her stern doctor. He was too much absorbed in his political disappointments to enter into the spirit of her prattle, but she caught readily a sympathy with his thoughts, she *felt* he liked to have her silent near him, and that sometimes her *naïve* exclamations could disperse from his face a gathering cloud of gloom.

Wherever they went, and leave her where he might, she had friendly relations with the native population—a word, a joke, a game of play, a smile. All over the island she was known and welcomed. She knew a blessed truth, which he did not: that in every human heart there is sympathy and kindness, and trusted in these qualities which experience had taught her *must* be there.

And so her life went on; three years passed in attendance on her aunt and in the constant companionship of the Doctor. She well understood that which many persons capable of self-sacrifice never discover—that by seeking variety and amusement in hours of leisure, she became of double value to her *invalid* as a medium of communication with the outward world.

In 1806, however, this existence was broken up. Mrs. Sibbes was recommended a sea voyage, and Mr. Sibbes having several merchant vessels in port on their way from the Levant to England, his family was embarked on board of one of them to go with a convoy to Gibraltar.

Amabel was absent but six months, yet when she returned to Valetta her old friend could scarcely recognise her. She left him a mere child, she came back to him a woman.

The voyage had revealed to her another life. They coasted along the shores of Africa, watching the palm-clad mountain ridges blending with the sky. A gentleman on board the vessel pointed out to the inquiring Amabel, the site of the submerged city—Dido's Carthage—the Carthage of the *Æneid*. He held a copy of Virgil in his hand, and was endeavoring to identify the poet's descriptions. He had not before taken much notice of his little fellow-passenger, but now, in answer to her eager questions, and moved by an impulse in search of sympathy, he volunteered to translate to her a book of the *Æneid*.

It was that which records the departure of Æneas, and the self-innolation of his victim on her lofty funeral pile. "It is not the finest in the poem," said the stranger; "I prefer the description of the sack of Troy."

"Oh! that I could read it all!" cried Amabel.

"You can—in Dryden's Virgil."

"I cannot get the book," she answered, with a voice so melancholy, that it awakened at once the mirth and the compassion of the stranger.

"Shall I send you one from England?"

"God bless you!—God reward you!" sprang to the lips of Amabel; and if she repressed the exclamation, it was not because she thought it ill-suited to the obligation.

There is a species of enthusiasm of this nature which is not unusual, even in very sober minds. It occurs when a portion of beautiful poetry has been read or heard, the remainder of which is unattainable. The remembrance of the broken pleasure dwells upon the mind; the melody of the verses—the interest of the story—haunts us in the daytime, and comes back to us in dreams; we brood over it; we cherish it, and we feel as if a part of our very being was wanting, till the missing portion is restored.

All the interest of Bella's trip was swallowed up in an intense desire to possess the promised Virgil. The chances of war were various,—it may have been lost upon its passage, or the promise forgotten—it never arrived.

But Bella was never long under the influence of discouragement. "If I cannot have what I want, I will use what I can," was, throughout life, (with one sad interval) her watchword. Her resolution was taken. An hour after their re-establishment in their house in Valetta, she had slipped away unobserved from her uncle and the doctor, and when the latter at midnight entered his own study, he found her seated there, with his old Virgil and a Latin dictionary, too much absorbed to have taken note of time.

Then first came to him the idea of educating her. Then it first struck him, that, though a woman might never be remarkable as a Latin scholar, though she might not wring her brain

for nonsense verses, or pass a creditable examination in the Eton grammar, she might become mistress of the poetry of old.

The notion pleased him. He invited her to come every morning to his quarters; and soon the hours they devoted to the study of the poets and of history became to both the happiest of their lives.

Her enthusiasm supplied the place of early habits of study. Her early responsibilities had disciplined her mind. But if, in these respects, she fell something short of the standard of passive obedience required in a school, she had at least escaped the evils of an early over-education. Her faculties were not stunted;—her thirst for knowledge never had been satiated. With her, the demand for information exceeded the supply, and thus retained its price and value. Her little capital of knowledge was constantly employed.

To say that the better part of education is self-bestowed, would be an impertinent truism; but my father was accustomed to go further, and assert that *all education is of self*, and that the mere acquisition of knowledge and accomplishment is unworthy such a name. "Till knowledge," he observes, "has become a portion of our being—something upon which we act—which, subtracted from us, would make us other than we are—it has not entered into our education. *A little knowledge* is only dangerous when it lies crude and undigested, without working its way into the heart, out of the head."

French and Italian she acquired naturally—the former from her aunt, the latter from her intercourse with the better class of the Maltese; but, at the same time, she became mistress of two *patois* languages—the mixed Arabic and Italian used by the lower class of the native population of Valetta. and the harsh, inflexible Breton, which was by inheritance her native tongue.

Her earliest pleasure had been to sit upon a little footstool, gazing up into her aunt's pale face, whilst, with lingering enthusiasm, Louise talked to her of Brittany, or, in a soft, low voice, sang ballads, framed when men wrote little, but reflected much, and the experience of a lifetime was compressed into a

song. Brittany was, in the Middle Ages, the storehouse of romantic literature. The songs of the *Trouvère* and the *Jon-gleur*, which afterwards degenerated into our nursery ballads, had their origin among that people whose sober enthusiasm betrays their Celtic origin; and the child's imagination warmed at the recital of the adventures of the Breton hero, Arthur.

There are distinct stages of mind, which mark the progress of our years, developed in different degrees, according to circumstances or character, in every specimen of human nature. The child's first impulse is, to personalize all objects; and, in this state of mind, ideal things have, to him, a reality. Next comes the stage of youth, when real things are idealized; and the restless melancholy common to those just entering life, has its origin in an unacknowledged instinctive conviction that the first encounter with the realities of life will break in upon this state of feeling, and that the heart cannot repose itself in dreams.

It was Bella's transition on her return from her Mediterranean voyage from her first into her second period of mental history which had taken the doctor by surprise. Cut off from her usual companions, occupations, and resources, with the poetry of Virgil yet ringing in her ears, she had given herself up during her residence in Gibraltar to a new state of existence. The pleasures of her infancy were renewed and now appreciated. The tales of her aunt became her *Waverley Novels*—her *Ariosto*—and far more. We sober people, who can comment on our own enjoyment, seldom rest on such enchanted ground, where, falling asleep as it were to earthly objects, the dreamer is transported for a season to the poet's fairy land.

With that egotism of early youth which leads us to associate ourselves personally with all that interests us, she gave life and breath to the fancies that delighted her, and played a prominent part in her own ideal world. She lived amongst these wild creations, she felt with them, she imitated them. She adopted their scale of virtues, she imbibed a portion of their exaggerated sentiments, she adopted the country in which her fancy had located them, and their very religion had a peculiar charm for her. The only stipulation respecting her education made by Mr. Lane, when he gave her up to Mr. Sibbes,

was, that she should be brought up a member of the Church of England; but in Malta she imbibed a leaning towards Catholicism; its poetry impressed her fancy, and she cared little for its creed.

And it was well for her that she had even such slight links to bind her by a crude notion of loyalty to some form of Christianity; for the Doctor, her preceptor, called himself, in the disguised language of the times, a "philosopher." He could point out bigotries and fallacies; could make her feel a void—a want, by laying bare the insecure foundations of her faith; but there were points on which her warm young heart distrusted him; she accepted a great many of his opinions, always in the hope of seeing through them a something never there.

Two years thus passed; and Bella, now sixteen, grew restless and oppressed by the vagueness, the inapplicability of her feelings. She had no one into whose bosom she could pour them all, and learn by the mere recital that they were exaggerated and wrong. Then was felt that void which nature has implanted in a young girl's heart, to teach her, perhaps, that human life is incomplete without the union of two souls.

She was living in the house of Dr. Glascock. Mr. Sibbes was engaged in constant voyages, and in the melancholy condition of his wife's health, it seemed desirable that Dr. Glascock should receive her as "a nervous patient," with her niece and servant to occupy the first floor of a house which government had assigned him in that part of Valetta, called the suburb Floriana. The health of Amabel was perhaps less strong than in her earlier years. Her temperament had always been of a nervous character, and she was growing morbid. The Doctor's bitter theories struck painfully upon her sensibilities, and weakened the attachment she had early conceived for him. She had given up her healthful intercourse in works of charity and mutual kindness with the world without; and since "the salt had lost its savor" wherewith were the tone and freshness of her mind to be restored?

The doctor saw all this; with a sigh confessed that it was suitable companionship she wanted, and invited to his house

the daughter of an early friend of his, a lady who had just come out to Malta, the wife of a Captain Annesley.

Captain Annesley had an intimate friend, a Captain Warner. Both commanded sister brigs on the same station, both were looking eagerly for post rank in the service, both were gentlemen by birth, and gallant officers, and both had entered into the "holy estate," though Captain Warner was a widower. He had lost the year before, a wife, whom he had married when only a Lieutenant, who had left him two young children; now resident in England, under the care of their grandmother.

The brig which he commanded, came into Valetta a few days after the departure of Captain Annesley, and one of Captain Warner's first movements was to pay his respects to the wife of his friend.

Dr. Glascock having admitted Mrs. Annesley as an inmate of his family, had no power to prevent the daily calls of Captain Warner. In her society he saw the doctor's pupil, and Bella's beauty made a deep impression on his sailor-like susceptibility, whilst his attentions (the first ever directed to herself) produced all the feelings of surprise and gratification, which that sort of devotion naturally calls forth, ere circumstances have compelled the recipient to weigh its worth, or to calculate its probable conclusion.

Captain Warner was an excellent sailor; he could fight his ship with gallantry, and keep her in good discipline. He had a thousand anecdotes to tell, of adventures that had befallen him afloat and ashore; and told them so effectively, that the doctor began to fear lest, Othello-like, he should work his way into the affections of Bella. With the careless *insouciance* of his character and his profession, the Captain, considering that a mere medical man had no business to concern himself about Miss Karnac's affections, though too much of a gentleman to treat the doctor in his own house cavalierly, plainly showed that he came only to visit the ladies of the family, and that he considered all interest in himself, or his proceedings, as clearly beyond the limits of the jurisdiction of the doctor.

Dr. Glascock, in his turn, resented this by great stiffness of deportment when they met; by making and promulgating the

discovery, that the Captain's temper was imperious and excitable; and by threatening to remove his family across the Island, to a country-house he had at Ramalah, whither the Captain's professional engagements would rarely permit him to follow. And here it is that the doctor's narrative may properly be said to open. It was sent in 1819, with the following letter to my father.

"SIR :

"A man of the world knows always how to draw consolation from the society of objects worthy his affection, and to console himself for their removal.

"My knowledge of Miss Amabel de Karnac's early life does not enable me to pronounce any opinion upon her conduct or her character under circumstances unfamiliar, but I send, as you request, particulars relative to her early love affair, before leaving Valetta. I have no personal objection to this letter being shown to Capt. Warner. For this reason, I have begun my narrative at a point which will enable him to estimate the kind of way in which she then regarded him; and he may learn, possibly, to consider my wisdom was prophetic, when I counselled her to avoid all connexion with a country, where manners and dispositions not conventional, are misrepresented, misinterpreted, and misunderstood.

"Your obedient humble servant,

"THOS. GLASCOCK, M. D.

"Government Inspector of Hospitals at Valetta."

CHAPTER III.

Standing with reluctant feet,
Where the brook and river meet,
Maidenhood and childhood fleet.

Why thus pause in indecision,
Whilst the angels in thy vision
Beckon thee to fields Elysian?—H. W. LONGFELLOW.

ONE of the places which the great war of this century raised into the highest military and commercial consequence, was Malta. In its palmy days, the little island was the great emporium of British commerce. In 1808, even the friendly ports of Portugal were closed to English goods, and the only opening left for the introduction of our manufactures into Europe, was through the Ottoman Empire. Under these circumstances large numbers of English merchants emigrated to Malta, to maintain their trading communications with the East; the families of naval and military officers established themselves at Valetta, as a convenient residence in the vicinity of their friends; travellers shut out from continental tourage, were flocking eastward, taking Malta on their way:—its praises—or the contrary—during that period, have been said or sung, by Coleridge, Byron, and by many other visitors; and the little island—notwithstanding the denseness of its population, ten times exceeding that of any known corner of the world, in its average proportion; the immensely high rental of its land, or rather rock, for almost every foot of soil is artificial;—was in a state of activity and prosperity, unparalleled in its experience; though the industry of its inhabitants, and the forced fertility of its shelving hill-side terraces, have been the theme of classic song. No spot of ground has ever had so many masters, and no portion of Europe has a history so obscure. Phœnicians, Greeks, Carthaginians, Romans, Vandals, Huns and Saracens, Normans, Emperors of Germany, Kings of Arragon, Knights of Jerusalem, and French and English kings,

have by turns possessed it; and political events seem lately to have raised it to higher consequence than ever as a dependency on our crown.

"Under the English rule," says Pico, writing before the great plague which desolated it in 1813, "it was delightful to see the cities of the island, and particularly Valetta, crowded to excess with a contented population, intent on a variety of occupations, trades, and novel enterprises. Amidst the incessant hum of busy life, were heard various idioms, accompanied by different national customs, by reason of the many foreigners of divers nations there congregated together; a continual crowd of carts, asses, and porters, thronged the streets and lined the harbors; ships were unloading merchandise, and others were receiving cargoes; at the gates there was a perpetual jostle of busy comers and goers. And when this general activity of business ceased with the close of daylight, at night the shops, *cafés*, theatres, and all places of amusement, were frequented by a gay and festive crowd. The patriot congratulated himself on seeing every kind of wretchedness exiled from his birth-place, which had become the great commercial emporium of the European world; the stranger enjoyed its hospitality, and the government reaped the fruits of its wise provisions in the general happiness of the population."

The presence of a large naval force added greatly to the liveliness of Valetta. So many English families had settled there, that officers on coming into port looked forward to much gaiety, and were in the habit of returning, either at their own lodgings, or on shipboard, the attentions paid to them on shore.

The Admiral of the Port, at the time of our history, determined to do his part in aid of the general festivity, and issued cards for an entertainment on board his Flag Ship, which some young and lively women of his acquaintance undertook to persuade him must be a Fancy Ball.

Though Amabel was unknown in the English circles of Valetta, Captain Warner had no difficulty in procuring her an invitation, at the same time that he got one for Mrs. Annesley.

"Doctor," said Bella, exhibiting this note, "I am grown up. I want to see the world. Giacinta says I ought, and"

"And?"

"Captain Warner."

"Pooh! silly child—the world! Do you not think the private study of your private friends, who, in their daily lives, lay bare their hearts before you, better than looking on the varnished face of what men call society?"

"How should I know till I have tried both, Doctor? I dare say society is bad, but at least when people meet, each one dependent on the rest for pleasure, which all seek, there must be something of the law of love (nay, Doctor, not 'its counterfeit politeness, and not much of that') amongst them."

"Not so; men congregate in multitudes to make each other miserable. Hobbes, Grotius, and Spinoza, tell us right that society was first organized by men for their own advantage, each one hoping to win that advantage over his fellows by address or force."

"And what account do you make of family affection?"

"A thing you know but in wild theory. You make your own bright notions of what life should be, and fit your facts to suit your vague imagining. In 'love,' as you call it, there is little of loving kindness as a principle," said the Doctor.

"I will be loved, and I must love," cried Bella, passionately.

"Listen to me," replied the cynic. "You will grow like others, selfish, jealous, and covetous, after your kind. These things, instead of love, are mingled by men even with their religion. The condor wings his flight to Chimborazo, but his nature brings him back to the plain in search of prey. Captain Warner, let me hint to you, appreciates the value of *your gold*, your promised dowry. Widowers are mostly on the look-out for young and trusting hearts *with money*."

Bella smiled. Had her own mind been made up as to the degree of liking that she felt for the gay Captain, she would probably have answered by a perverse defence of her new *friend* (had he been nothing more to her), or by some pettish observation thrown out to irritate the Doctor, had he touched her heart thus roughly on a tenderer string. But the conclusion of the whole

matter was, that the Doctor admitting some reason in the reproaches she addressed to him on her seclusion, and still more influenced on the subject by his housekeeper, gave his consent reluctantly to her appearance at the party, coupled with the astonishing condition that she should accept him as her body-guard, over and above the *chaperonage* of Mrs. Annesley.

Having small time for preparation, she resolved to make her appearance as a peasant girl of Brittany, in a dress something like the gala dress of the richer Bernese maidens.

As hour after hour she labored on this costume with the occasional assistance of Mrs. Annesley, the Doctor would make constant pretexts for coming into the room that he might gaze upon the beauty of their young and happy faces, enhanced by a contrast of character and charms.

Mrs. Annesley, scarcely past the age of legal childhood, was an example of that fair and rounded healthy English beauty, which expresses generally great amiability of disposition and little activity of mind.

But her companion ! A stranger would at once have pronounced her a Maltese, for her dress, all black, was of the fashion of the isle, yet an accurate observer would have hesitated to assign that beautifully rounded speaking face to the daughter of a people of confessedly African extraction, though her hair was very dark and her eyes of a rich brown hue. At times a shade of sadness quenched the sunshine of her beauty ; it was always full of thought, the mirror of the soul, but smiles and dimples were its natural expression. The cares of life had not yet fallen upon one of the most free and natural of God's creatures, but her mind had lately caught a vision of existence, and she shrank shuddering from the realities of life, when she reflected that she too might be called upon to struggle and endure. With no one to repress the natural expression and free expansion of her nature, she had till recently been infinitely happy, though the careful hand of discipline was wanting to teach her in these days of early girlhood, when life was lavish of the gifts it flung around her, how to store up the materials from whence to fashion permanent felicity, when the dark days of her destiny should come,

in which she should say of the things that now delighted her, "I have no pleasure in them."

The child gathers flowers in the sunshine, but he weaves them into garlands wherewith he crowns himself, when sitting in the shade.

"The best attainments are made from inward impulse," says the lamented Margaret Fuller, in her *Papers on Literature and Art*; "but it does not follow that outward discipline of any liberality will impair grace or strength, and it is impossible for any mind fully or harmoniously to ascertain its own wants, without being made to resound from some strong outward pressure."

She was but at that age when childhood imperceptibly is merged in womanhood; that age when a tender and judicious mother, relying on effects already wrought by the loving discipline of early days, will exert her influence rather than her authority; when the human soul, if gifted with any powers of reflection, stands bewildered with the responsibilities just opening before it; when ceasing to live for self we begin to carry forth the hoarded love of infancy upon the service of others; when human life seems a dark problem; when the spirit, fearless in its inexperience, sometimes longs to try its powers; when the philosophic observer watches the unfolding of the character, and the parent and true friend lay up before the throne of God their prayers in store for the young creature, whom they would fain hold back a short time longer from the world in which she pants to share.

Sixteen! the poet's *sweet sixteen*! We protest against the bard as an authority. It is the most important era in a young girl's life, and to many, we are certain, the least happy. She struggles with her own position, she finds life incomprehensible. New duties are rudely thrust upon her. She has to achieve consideration even in the domestic circle; she commits follies, which, long wept over, will influence her character; faults which appear to others and herself an earnest of future error. She is restless and unhappy. The period of life (even with all the spring-tide hopes of an opening destiny before her) that a wise woman would least willingly take back again, would be the poet's "sweet sixteen!"

The evening came, hazy with heat. At about six o'clock news was brought to Mrs. Annesley that her husband's ship, the Sea Gull, with a prize in tow, was coming into the Great Harbor, and she hurried to the water's edge to be the first to go on board of her.

When the hour came for the departure of Bella and the Doctor, he went into the garden and called her.

"I am ready, Doctor," was her answer, and her sweet head parted the flowering shrubs upon her trellised balcony.

"An angel's living portrait," he exclaims, "framed by the leaves and flowers!"

"Beauty is a great gift of heaven," it is true, but it is chiefly valuable because it gives, at starting, a large advantage in society. In the social circle it can be of no account, unless the want of the complacency it gives is allowed to sour the disposition of the plainer members of a family.

Beauty always becomes associated in idea with excellence, assert to the contrary who may. And this is the true answer to those foolish actualists, who nowadays object to having the heroes of romance made handsome and the heroines all fair. If their characters, noble or lovely, had been known to the reader in actual life as well as he learns to know them in the pages of the novel, they would assuredly have seemed beautiful to him. It would be giving him a false idea by describing them as unattractive; he must therefore be presented with a beautiful idea.

But to return to her as she stood waiting in the Doctor's study. The rattling cabriolet swung upon two high wheels, and weighing down behind, drawn by a lusty mule, was at the door. He put her in, and they drove off along the narrow, steep, irregular street (swarming with population, and crowded with knightly monuments of the chivalric ages), which led to both of the great harbors from the suburb Floriana.

They crossed the Plaza Britannica, where troops of English red-coats were parading, a scene of mechanical regularity totally opposed to that presented in the streets, or rather alleys, where ladies of all ranks sat *en plein air* on the flat roofs, or in the flowery balconies of tall white houses, whilst market-

women, standing beneath the canvas of rude booths, sold provisions to the passenger. Now, as an opening was passed, they saw down a "street of stairs," the deep blue of the harbor, dotted with white shipping; and next they passed before some public building, the residence of a proud "language" in Valetta's knightly days, built of grey stone, and more remarkable for attention to general symmetry of effect than for any elaboration of ornament; and rattling down a rough steep hill, they arrived at the Marina.

The Doctor saw Pietro, an acquaintance, amongst the lounging boatmen, and signed to him. He launched his boat into the water, and came round to meet them at the Nix Mangare stairs. As he did so the gig of Captain Warner's ship, the Dodo, touched the stairs, and Captain Warner, springing on shore, made his way towards them.

"I am sorry, sir," he said to Dr. Glascock, "to detain this lady by asking you to make a little *detour* on our way to the Undaunted. The Sea Gull has lost her surgeon in the action, and the French Captain of her prize is badly wounded. Captain Annesley presents his compliments, and would be glad if you would come on board."

"To the Sea Gull!"

There she lay, sail after sail coming down with cool and practised regularity—her crew no more in a bustle than if she had been lying lazily becalmed in the waters of the Tropics.

Scarcely a word was said until they reached the vessel: before the accommodation chair could be got ready, Amabel had followed the doctor up the side, to the great admiration of the midshipmen, and, shading her beauty with her large straw hat, passed below into the captain's cabin.

"Glad to see you, Dr. Glascock," was his salutation; "and you too, Miss Bella. You will find my prisoner intractable, and I ventured, my good sir, to send for you to *parlez-vous* to him. Persuade him to have his wounds dressed; he won't listen to my English, and I think him in rather a bad way, doctor."

So saying, he opened the door of his own cabin, which had been given up considerably to the wounded French commander. Bella remained in the cabin, listening to the doctor's broken

remonstrances addressed to the sick Frenchman, and, with a woman's ready sympathy for the unfortunate, straining her ear for his voice in reply.

From girlhood she had, as we have said, been at the hospital. No one had taught *her* that attendance on the sick could be unfeminine; on the contrary, the doctor's creed was, that a woman was always in her sphere, if she can be of use to others. Accustomed to be listened to, she felt sure *she* could persuade where all the doctor's arguments had not succeeded. She opened the cabin door, and no sooner had she appeared upon the threshold, than the young Frenchman, with a half-cry, rose from his pillow.

His face was of death's yellowish paleness, his long dark hair thrown back from his forehead, matted with dried blood, stood up around his face, stiffly and wildly. Dark hair was on his lip, the soft fine growth of very early manhood, which, having been for some days untrimmed and neglected, made him look even more haggard than his paleness. Yet still they could discover fine features. The fires of intellect were not extinguished in his blood-shot, glazing eyes;—the arm that lay so powerless upon the coverlet, had, a day or two earlier, wielded the lost sword, now hanging, a trophy of success, in a corner of the captain's cabin. Parts of his martial accoutrements, spotted with blood, and torn with rents of battle, lay scattered on the bedding.

"Speak to him," said the doctor.

Her voice was choked, but her face spoke to his heart with the eloquent sympathy of tears.

The prisoner first broke silence; stretching out his hand, he drew her towards him.

"*Etes vous Bretonne ?*" he said, in a low voice.

The doctor made ready his instruments, and watched them.

"Yes. •Not *Bretonne* by birth. I was not born there; but my father was from Brittany."

The young man gazed upon her fixedly.

"Are you" he began.

She started.

"I am Felix," he said, painfully.

In the years that had elapsed since they last met, his image had faded in her heart; yet not so utterly, but that she spoke the truth when, as he clasped her hand, she whispered, with a blush, that her companion and compatriot had never been forgotten.

There was a pause. The heart of the sufferer was stirred within him. Dr. Glascock was preparing to come forward. Amabel collected all her courage.

"For the sake of our dear France," she said, "you must submit, and let us aid you."

With woman's sweetest tact she had found out the vulnerable point in his affections, and had associated herself there.

"No," he replied, half fiercely. "I will not live to pine over the ruin of my hopes in any English prison. France should be served only by the fortunate. Enough, who have not failed, are left to serve her. Those who fail should die."

She fell upon her knees beside his cot; clasping his left hand fast in both her own, she pressed it to her forehead, to her lips, in an agony of supplication. The young man looked at her irresolute. Something to live for, in what had seemed to him his last hour, he had found. Convulsively the blood-stained hand she held returned the pressure of her soft warm fingers. At that moment the Doctor drew near and caught his eye. He saw his aid would no longer be rejected. Two balls were extracted, and his wounds dressed, whilst he lay without speaking, looking at Amabel with a fixed yet sad expression. When all was over he grew faint; Bella's small hands parted his matted hair upon his forehead, and applied restoratives. Dr. Glascock called up the Captain's steward, gave him directions for his attendance that night upon his patient, and unwilling to agitate him further by the sight of his companion, took her by the hand and led her into the cabin.

"A highly improper thing," they heard Captain Warner saying as they entered. But he broke off his observation at that word, and merely remarked to Amabel, in a tone of irritation, that "they should be confoundedly late at the Admiral's ball."

"Can you think that I am going to the ball after such a

scene as this?" she replied, surprised, "and in such a dress?" she added, holding up her skirt stained with large drops of blood.

The Captain began eagerly to remonstrate, assuring her that this would be the last time he should see her for some months, the Dodo being under sailing orders.

Unmoved by what he said, she coldly wished him a good night, and, in a few moments, she and Dr. Glascock were seated in their boat pulling for the Marina.

"You might have gone on to the ball," he said; "but please yourself. I hope you will find a woman's satisfaction in the thought that your conduct has been exceedingly disagreeable to-night to Captain Warner."

"And what signifies Captain Warner's displeasure to me?" she said impatiently.

"Less than it did this morning, I suspect," replied the Doctor.

CHAPTER IV.

Who sows in tears his spring-tide years
 Shall bind the golden sheaves;
 Who scatters flowers in summer bowers
 Shall reap but the withered leaves.

Mrs. Howe—*South Boston.*

BELLA, like the Sultanesse Scheherazade, the mother of Female Novelists, was roused "an hour before day" by an unusual bustle, in the midst of which she could distinguish the voice of Doctor Glascock, who was scolding on the stairs. It was seldom the custom of that cynic to scold aloud, still less to swear out roundly. He was doing both on the present occasion.

"What is the matter?" said Bella, opening her door and encountering the housekeeper.

"*Signorina*," said Giacinta, "*il Capitano Inglese* is bringing in a sick Frenchman, a young prisoner. The officers' quarters are all full in the Hospital, and he has got an order from the Governor to remove him here into our spare chamber. This

house belongs to the English government, and the *Signor Padrone* had it on condition that he should give up any of the rooms when they were wanted ; but, *cospetto!* it never happened so before!" And she went on to complain to Amabel that there being no nurses disengaged in the Hospital the Doctor had ordered her to attend on the young prisoner.

"Oh! stay, Giacinta, stay! I can help you. I am as good a nurse as you," said Bella, hurrying her *toilette*.

"Impossible!" said Giacinta. "The Doctor's orders are express, that you shall not go into his room for fear of disturbing or exciting him. When the *Signor Dottore* commands, *bisogna obbedire*."

Bella made a little face of mutiny at this, an expression which soon changed into one of disappointment, when she found it impossible to break through the cold stern reserve of the Doctor at the breakfast-table. His general deportment and his monosyllables did not encourage her to ask him questions.

In vain she tried her usual occupations. There was a change that day within herself which infected everything around ; and yet its influences were not unpleasant ; her restlessness brought with it no vexation or remorse. The day before she had been unfettered, free, thirsting for enjoyment ; looking on life as a dark problem, and her own powers of every kind with a strange fear because they were untried. Her heart overflowing with lovingness which was undemanded, enthusiasms repressed, and poetry and speculations others little understood. A more timid—a more *English* nature might have been repressed into mediocrity, and have retained nothing* of all its early promise, save the seeds of morbid sentiment to bear a crop of eccentricities, invalid peevishness, or disgust of the world in after years ; but Bella, while bewildering her young mind with great problems, had kept her heart fresh by contact with the world without, and waited for her destiny. Her hour had come. The sun had risen on her path, and all her being was about to waken into life under the first influences of love.

All Malta, at midday, was taking its *siesta* ; the house was hushed ; Amabel, who never slept by daylight, sat in silent reverie in her own room. This midday hour was the Sabbath

of her day, devoted to her studies, contemplations, and the communings of her young spirit with itself, and with its God. She sat leaning her head against the trellis-work, festooned with a profusion of sweet flowers, which overhung the window of her chamber, when she was surprised by the sudden entrance of the old housekeeper.

“*Ch' è, Giacinta?*”

“*Signorina*, he has come to himself; but he is greatly changed. I cannot understand him perfectly, but he is calling you; saying your name over and over, and Mrs. Annesley has sent me here for you; but the *Signor Dottore* said so positively, you were not to see him, and . . . I dare not wake the *Signor Dottore*.”

A smile broke over the face of *la Signorina*, so bright, bewitching, and persuasive, that Giacinta felt that by such another smile her master's worst displeasure might be at once subdued.

“*Cara Giacinta!* Certainly one must not wake *il Signor Dottore*. It is an act of humanity. Let us go.”

But, when they reached the chamber, the prisoner appeared to have dropped off into a sudden sleep, and it was not wise to awaken him.

Amabel found a letter lying on the table, directed to *herself*, but “*Après ma mort*” was written in one corner.

She sat down on the floor of the ante-chamber. The daylight waned, and the shadows of the evening quietly stole on, and she still sat with her little white dog nestling in her lap, leaning her head against the door-post, listening to every sound. Giacinta had opened the door a little way, and a stream of dying sunlight lay flickering and narrowing upon the floor.

As she sat watching it in silence, her mind less occupied with thoughts than with sensations, she remarked that it was suddenly invaded by a dark, yet shining stream, moving across it slowly. The dog, too, stretched himself, whined, sniffed, and darted into the chamber. She saw his paws dyed as he went. A dreadful fear came over her. She sprang forward—touched it. . . . “*Maria Santissima, help!*” she screamed to Giacinta. “It is blood!”

It was found that the prisoner had quietly removed the dressings of his wounds, with an intent to bleed to death; and, but for the little stream of blood which had trickled on the floor, and caught the eye of Amabel, in another half hour he would have been beyond their care. He was not quite gone, however; weak as he was, his consciousness had not forsaken him; he pressed the hand of his young nurse as she leaned over him, and directed her attention, by a feeble glance, towards the letter on the table. Leaving him in abler hands, she turned aside, and broke it open. Inclosed was a short letter to Ferdinand, a brother, serving in Spain, in Dupont's army, beseeching him to consider this document as a last will and testament, and to restore to the Viscount de Karnac's daughter, for his sake, all that part of the Viscount's Breton property which had fallen by their father's purchase, and subsequent distribution of his estate, to his (Felix Guiscard's) share.

"Doctor—Doctor!" cried Amabel, shocked at the idea of pecuniarily profiting by the death of her early playfellow. "Tell him that he ought not to do this. Tell him that he will not die. Tell him so—dear Doctor."

"You had better hold your tongue, Miss Bella," the Doctor answered sternly; "I will not answer for his life if you repeat these scenes."

"Oh! God forbid! He must not die! Only tell me, Doctor, that he will not die. Save him! Oh! say one word to me. Say he will not die, dearest, dearest Doctor!"

But Dr. Glascock did not condescend to give an answer. He was again binding up the wounds of his patient, now quite incapable of resistance or exertion; and Amabel insisting on *her right* to stay beside him, with comments, *sotto voce*, on the insufficiency of Giacinta, was suffered to remain watching all night the wavering of the spark of life, administering cordials, bending over him with her sweet looks of interest and compassion, and praying for him with an intensity of feeling which took the place of mere expression; whilst Giacinta told her beads in the same cause at the foot of the bed. He who does infinitely "above all that we can either ask or think," who is full of compassion and consolation, would never refuse to grant

the letter of such petitions, did He not feel that in taking the beloved one, He does all "far better than we know."

In this instance the prayer was heard, and Felix Guiscard, after days of unconsciousness and suffering, gradually regained his powers. The life that Amabel had saved was now her *right*, and she asserted it; not that the prisoner was any longer disposed to make away with himself. Like Napoleon, after the abortive poisoning at Fontainebleau; or Clive, when his suicidal pistol had twice flashed in the pan; he seemed sobered by his attempt, and inclined to accept and make the best of the decrees of Destiny.

The individual most to be pitied in the group was the poor Doctor.

He had quarrelled with Amabel, who scarcely felt the coldness, so engrossed was she by her new interest in Felix.

Dr. Glascock had insisted after the night of her first watching on taking her with him to the seclusion of his country house at Ramalah. A somewhat violent scene had taken place between them, in which the Doctor stretched imprudently the bounds of his authority. Amabel fortified herself with the opinion of the Annesleys, and Dr. Glascock had been overcome.

Between them now there was a great gulf fixed. Feeling that an attachment to the young French captain was inevitable, he thenceforth kept aloof, that he might not watch its progress; and as day by day he saw her more engrossed with her new hopes and occupations, he drew back into himself, growing more caustic, more cynical, more the enemy of the world.

Oh! the joy of those first days when Amabel could lead her patient out into the summer air at sunset, when she sat by him in the garden and sang him Breton lays, or listened to his descriptions of his father's home.

When women discuss together the mysteries of courtship, they often remark that it is a pity the task of love-making has not been confided to them.

They understand the secret workings of the heart so much better than the sex to whom it is permitted to be demonstrative; their tact is so much finer—their attention is so much

more habituated to trifles—and trifles make the sum of courtship—that it often seems a pity that the exercise of these abilities in the most important passage of their whole lives is denied them. “Man carves for himself, woman is helped to her destiny,” says a dear, dear friend of mine, the brilliant Julia, and the same thought is gracefully expressed in a little Spanish poem :

Alas ! to seize the moment
When heart inclines to heart,
And press a suit with passion,
Is not a woman's part.
If man comes not to gather
The roses where they stand,
They fade amidst their foliage,
They cannot seek his hand.

Here, however, was in part exception. Amabel held the chief authority. Felix was helpless, thrown upon her loving care for the recovery of his health, and for his amusement in convalescence ; it was for her to plan, devise, and bring about all that could make him happy. She could give him her sweetest smiles without a fear of misconstruction ; she could dare to be true in act to her own feelings without drawing upon herself the slanderous clamor of the strife of tongues.

Captain Annesley, before the Sea Gull left, made arrangements for his prisoner's removal, on *parole*, to Citta Vecchia ; whilst Amabel accompanied Dr. Glascock to his country-house at Ramalah. But the decayed capital of Malta is at no formidable distance from the southern centre of the island, and Felix met her every day. Bella long pondered in her heart the memory of their walks along the rocky beach ; their whispered words to the deep sounding melody of the mysterious ocean ; the tales he told of his adventurous life by sea and land, and of the great Napoleon ; whilst in return she read to him her favorite authors, and shared with him her inner life, “those sacred things that belong unto the soul.”

And yet they were half children. They threw pebbles into the ocean, they made merriment from trifles, they laughed, enjoyed, and joked, rather than sentimentalized or sighed. Felix scarcely knew he was in love, but felt the pleasures

of the courtship, and Amabel gave no account to herself of her sensations.

In highest art is the repose of power. A love perfected has also its repose. When you can prattle to another unreservedly *of yourself*, without calculating even unconsciously on the effect you are producing, be sure you love with your whole heart, and are basking in the consciousness of a reciprocity of love.

Bella, like most young persons who have any profundity of character, was jealous over her deepest feelings; to talk of herself was a stretch of affection and of confidence that in earlier days she had rarely accorded even to the Doctor. But now the passing mood, the flash of thought, the impulse, grave or gay, was shared with Felix.

Love listens first, then speaks. She had mounted above the earlier stages of a true devoted love, and loved him as the completion of her being—loved him less for *his sake* than *her own*.

Mrs. Annesley, growing a little scandalized at the extent of the intimacy which withdrew her young companion from her former friends, in writing to her husband, did not fail to put into her letter an account of what she called "this strange engagement."

Belle would have said she was in Captain Warner's interest, yet it was not exactly so, for she would not have been unwilling that through her husband, Capt. Warner should learn something to the disparagement of the young lady, for whose sake, during his late stay in Valetta, he had relaxed in the attentions he had formerly been wont to pay to her.

CHAPTER V.

"We wives of sailors only can lay claim to any real knowledge of the noble profession. What natural object is there, or can there be," exclaimed the nautical Dowager, in a burst of professional enthusiasm, "finer than a stately ship breasting the billows, as I have heard the Admiral say a thousand times; its taffrail ploughing the main, and its cut-water gliding after. . . . I know not, my dear Wyllys, if I make myself intelligible to you."—RED ROVER.

"June 17.—H. M. S. Dodo; Commander Leonard Warner. Off Cape Passaro; latitude $36^{\circ} 33'$, longitude $15^{\circ} 2'$; weather clear; wind S. S. W.; light breezes, and making about four knots, with only the top-sails set, to keep in company with the convoy. At noon made out a sail to the S. W. of us, standing across from the coast of Africa. Made signals to convoy to close, as she might prove an enemy.

"At 4 P. M., made her out as H. M. S. Sea Gull, Captain Annesley. Passed some miles to the southward of us, standing apparently on her course for Malta. Made us a signal, 'Mis—Malta—Frenchman—engaged—Admiral's order—' The remainder unintelligible."

Such was the entry made into his log book about 6 P. M. of the same evening, by my father, Theodosius Ord, midshipman on board the Dodo, fourteen or fifteen years or so before my existence became an unextinguishable fact in the creation.

The weather, so summarily dismissed as "clear" in the official document, had been early in the morning gloriously beautiful.

The Dodo, having charge of a large convoy of merchantmen, bound from Cadiz to Malta, was hugging pretty closely the Sicilian shore. The undulating coast, crowned by the snows of Etna, was visible with sufficient distinctness for those on board the Dodo to mark the glancing patches of bright sunlight on the mountains, in contrast with the masses of deep shadow lying between them over the valleys. Objects, however, unless thrown into clear relief by gleams of the mellowing sunlight against a background of blue sky, were not uniformly dis-

tinguishable. The water, deepest blue, was more than rippled, for the wind was rising, and the twenty sail of merchantmen, scattered over an area of two miles, according to their respective rates of sailing, presented the same contrast of glistening light and massy shadow upon their quivering sails.

At a long distance to the south-east, on the direct course for Malta, a practised nautical eye might yet discern the upper sails of a far-off vessel—a glimmering speck of light, but dimly seen on the extreme verge of the two blues of the horizon.

It was H. M. Brig *Sea Gull*, which had passed the merchant fleet about two hours earlier, and it caught at once the eye of Captain Warner, of the *Dodo*, who had come up on deck after his dinner, at the moment of the opening of this portion of our story.

He was a man of middle height, stoutly yet trigly built, of a make and size well fitted for activity. He wore the handsome undress naval uniform of the good old days, when pantaloons and coat pockets were yet unseamed with unsailorly gold lace, and a commission of taste at the Admiralty had not patched the cuffs and collars of the service with red cloth, like the coats of the two-penny postmen. His forehead, which was high, sloped slightly back, and was extremely broad and full over the eyes; a style of feature enhanced in beauty to the utmost by the way in which his light hair, not exactly curled but waving, was combed back from his temples—singularly calculated to convey an idea of firmness, nobleness, and authority, and much more often met with fifty years ago than at the present day. His face, habitually expressive of easy enjoyment, denoted that the cares of this world were strangers to his heart, or else sat lightly on him; but in moments of command or irritation it could assume the very sternest of expressions—cold and hard, softened, however, by his eyes, which were a clear, bright blue, more sparkling and vivacious than is usual with blue eyes.

He took a rapid survey of sky, convoy, land, and ocean, in which he was assisted by his first lieutenant, a man much older than himself, kept down in his profession by occasional fits of inebriety, who, with his hands in the pockets of his jacket

and a cap upon his head, awaited, with rather a sulky expression of countenance, the remarks of his superior.

"Keep her head three points more off the land, Mr. Grump," was the first order; "there may be wind to-night, and I had rather get an offing."

"Confound those lumbering merchantmen," remarked the first lieutenant, pointing to the sternmost of the convoy, "there are three or four amongst them floating about like tubs."

"Make the signal, Mr. Grump, to close in for the night, and let that make-shift whipper-in of ours tow up those two brigs yonder. Here, Ord! Where is that young gentleman? Call him and let him make the signal." The first lieutenant passed the word for Mr. Ord, who at that moment was engaged in making in his log the already quoted entry; and having sent for him observed gruffly to the Captain, that, "that lad would be sure to make some horrible mistake some day. Always confident—no consideration—he could not show less care or act with more precipitation if he had swallowed the signal-book."

"Mr. Ord," said the Captain, somewhat sternly, as he came upon the quarter-deck, after this observation, "you are certain you were right about that signal?"

"I am, sir. What more there was I cannot say; the ship dipped. But so far as it goes I am confident of accuracy. There are not many pairs of eyes in the ship that could have made out any signal at a distance of so many miles."

"There's not a single ship in His Majesty's fleets in the Mediterranean that begins with M. I. S.," put in the first lieutenant; "but plenty with M. I. N. Minotaur, Minorca, Minstrel, Min——"

"M. I. S.," repeated the Captain, interrupting him, "you are quite positive, Mr. Ord?"

"Positive, indeed," muttered the first lieutenant, as Theodosius reasserted his firm belief that he had rightly interpreted the signal. "Positive, indeed. What man, I ask you, in his senses would abbreviate a ship's name in a signal? M. I. N. it must have been, and you mistook the second number. Captain Warner, sir, I'd lay my life the Minotaur, the Min-

strel, or Minorca, is engaged with the enemy at this moment somewhere between this and Malta; and the Admiral's order is for us to reinforce her." And Mr. Grump concluded with an angry glance and an accompanying gesture towards his junior, distinctly signifying, "But for *you* we might have been upon the spot to share the fun and prize money."

"Make the night signal to the convoy," said the Captain; and soon the little fleet came closing round the Dodo like chickens snuggling beneath their mother's wing; and lest some hovering Frenchman like a stealthy hawk might chance during the night to filch one of them away, a sailor was sent aloft an hour before night-fall to sweep the horizon with a glass, but even the Sea Gull had disappeared and he saw nothing but blue water out to seaward.

The Captain leaning over his vessel's side watched these preparations; saw how the night closed jealously over the momentary gleam of twilight, and remarked the shimmering light of a full moon upon the water.

He had put his cocked hat between his knees as he gazed over the side of his vessel, and, as he stood half leaning against one of the ship's guns and half against her bulwarks, the wind blew his hair about his face, the spray dashed up at intervals upon him, and the Lieutenant, who had set his watch, remarked, that lost in thought he seemed indifferent to outward circumstances, and that the expression of his features was disturbed.

The signal by which his first lieutenant was disquieted was no mystery to him. It had been made, he knew, but for his private information, and with a sailor's quickness he had understood it immediately.

"Engaged!—engaged, is she? Engaged to that French prisoner!"

And as memory in moments of vexation loves to dwell upon the little sacrifices that have been made in hope for those who have disappointed us, he called to mind the various little rarities he had collected to offer her as gifts, at every port that he had touched at after leaving Malta, and remembered the circumstances of each purchase, and the impression he had hoped they would produce on her.

Uncertainty, and jealousy, and mortification, and displeasure, were struggling with the remembrance of her charms. So simple, *naïve*, beautiful, and joyous! What a splendid woman, as Mrs. Leonard Warner, she would have made! How greatly she would have graced his always well-kept table! How proud he would have been of her! How much his marriage would have mortified all the ambitious spinsters of his neighborhood in England!

He was naturally a man who loved his home. Like most of those engaged in active life, it was pleasant to him to have a spot set apart to hold his treasures; a shrine of his own rearing, to which he might (returning) bring large tributes from his fame, his fortune, his hopes, his happiness.

He had once had such a spot, but it was only for a brief interval in his life; his household gods had been both suddenly and rudely broken; death had made desolate the little plot of happiness that he had redeemed from the exigencies of his professional career.

He had married young; a woman not interesting—yet he had invested her with interest; though merely domestic, she had sufficed for his requirements. She was the portionless daughter of a lieutenant in the service; but the bride that he now coveted had noble blood, and would inherit money. His first wife had given him, in all things, his own way—was pale, delicate, and querulous, a sort of upper-servant to his children; but this was not the idea he had formed of his new bride. She, he intended, should be perfectly domestic, ministering in every particular to his comfort, yet at the same time to his vanity.

He contemplated Amabel with complacency. He thought how he would exhibit her beauty, with pride, as his possession;—and the society of so superior a being would be of such advantage to his children! Katie, the elder, would grow up, under her care, no uncouth country-maiden, but would unconsciously acquire grace and grow another Bella.

He had almost thought his dream into reality, when an angry whisper, on the other side the deck, broke up his meditations.

"I tell you, sir, you did mistake that signal. The Minotaur, the Minstrel, or Minorca, must be engaged out yonder with some Frenchman. Had you made the thing out plain, we might have put the convoy into some Sicilian port, and gone in search of them."

The Captain looked up at the night, clear, starry, with the wind rising.

"You may let that matter rest, Grump," he said, passing his first lieutenant, who had the early watch, on his way to the companion. "I am satisfied with Mr. Ord; as signal midshipman, he has my approbation."

"Yes, always so. The lad would do anything for praise. He will be guilty to-morrow of some new piece of inconsideration or absurdity," muttered the lieutenant, as Captain Warner descended to his cabin. "A relation of the Captain's! Enough to serve him upon all occasions. Pah!"

And Mr. Grump balanced himself upon his heels, and took hold with both hands of two ropes near him, and still balancing, looked out, between his arms, into the night; forgetting that, partly owing to his own prejudice against the lad, and partly, from an exaggerated desire on the Captain's part to avoid all suspicion amongst his officers of nepotie partiality, Theodosius was the lad most frequently found fault with, and most often put upon unpleasant duty in the vessel.

He was right, however, in his estimation of his character. "That lad will do anything for praise," struck at the root of his disposition. He had run away from school to join Captain Warner, the first cousin of his mother, who had called him a "smart fellow."

As the kinsman of his Captain, it was always suspected he was favored by authority. All the fancied slights and vexations received from their superiors, by his comrades, were revenged upon him.

When disposed to do him justice, they allowed that he was good-tempered and *safe*; his love of approbation, leading him rarely to risk the good opinion of a comrade, by telling any anecdote to his disadvantage. He was not a lad of very

social habits, or the temptation of shining at another's expense might possibly have proved too strong for him.

He adored his profession. To have been honorably mentioned in a despatch, he would have accepted any danger. He was eager, energetic, and self-confident, when he had only himself to depend upon; was always going beyond his functions, or the wishes of his superiors, and in constant scrapes on every occasion. He was one of those persons, in short, who would have won all praise, had he stopped midway in every undertaking; but, not being able to withstand the temptation of making any one his friend, he was always carried by excess of zeal beyond the confines of prudence, duty, and authority. He was the most active spirit of the ship, and never could resist any glance of approbation.

If I cast blame upon his motives, it is because in after years he taught me, that man's duty rests upon more stable principles; and if I point out as a weakness, his love of approbation, it is because he taught me early to consider it so. But the majority of men who have adopted these ideas as their auxiliaries in the work of education, have no right to call his principle of action worthless, or his ambition unchristian, vain, or unennobling. He kept his watch that night, with a light heart, proud of the approbation of his commander, and of his own quickness of sight which had made out the signal.

Little he knew that with the facts that it communicated, there lay bound up his own history.

* * * * *

Hurrah! for the Valetta harbor! No captain ever ran in there with a convoy more eagerly than Captain Warner, five days after he had made out the unwelcome signal.

Beautiful harbor! On the one hand frowned the Castle of St. Elmo, a vast mass of jagged freestone broken here and there by loopholes, and squared windows, cut out without regard to architectural regularity. Before the city stretched the beautiful smooth bay, whose mouth opened to the north-east, guarded by the round and light-house looking Fort Riascoli.

It was Sunday, and the ships were dressed in flags; the hum

of commerce was lessened if not hushed ; and but for the bustle caused by the entrance of the little merchant fleet, there would have been a Sabbath stillness in the harbor, the vessels almost basking in the intense heat of the sunny summer day. There was a couple of three-deckers at that time in port, but the object that first struck the eyes of Captain Warner, was the Sea Gull anchored near the quarantine harbor, or Marsa Musat, which is separated from the larger, outer harbor, by the sharp and tongue-like promontory on which is built the town.

The moment Captain Warner could feel it right to leave his vessel, his gig was manned, and pulling alongside the Sea Gull, he asked eagerly for Captain Annesley.

The Captain had gone ashore.

" Had the Sea Gull only come into port that morning ?"

" No, yesterday. They had been in chase of a French brig, which had run them a hundred miles out of their course to the eastward."

Captain Warner saluted the officer at the Sea Gull's gangway, and threw himself back in the stern sheets impatiently. His coxswain asked his orders.

" To the stairs ! The Nix Mangare."

They landed him beneath the frowning front of stern St. Elmo, and, turning to his right, he walked along the quay of the great harbor.

Here lay boats of every shape and of all sizes drawn up upon the beach out of the water ; sailors of all nations lounging lazily around. The trig man-o'-war's man in blue jacket, white trowsers, and straw hat, was awaiting the arrival of some officer ; Maltese fisher sailors, the best in the Mediterranean, who had spent their night upon the waters, lay sleeping out the day beside their fishing craft, dressed in white cotton shirts, full trowsers to the knee, the rest of the leg naked or swathed in loose unwieldy bands, long knives in shagreen sheaths with the handles sticking out of their gay girdles, and striped caps of red or blue upon their heads. There were likewise lounging, smoking or asleep, Greek and occasionally Turkish sailors ; for the trade with the Levant, at that time very flourishing, was all carried on through Malta, and the dresses and accoutre-

ments of these wild groups were remarkably in keeping with the semi-Orientalism of the scene. Shops for eastern goods, and sailors' eating-houses, bordered the Marina; but all the rest of the buildings facing inward, gave to the mere European traveller a notion of domestic architecture in the eastern style.

The Captain's intention was to call on Mrs. Annesley, but remembering that it was Sunday, he took his road past the little chapel of the English near the Governor's residence.

He met the congregation coming out; amongst them Captain and Mrs. Annesley.

"Ha! Warner, old boy!" said the Captain. "How are you? And what did you make out of my signal?"

"That Miss Karnac is to be married to your infernal French Captain," was the answer.

"But that was not the point of it," the other replied. "Since I heard how things were going from my wife, I have been off Tarragona, and Admiral—— happening to ask after you, I told him the whole story. Says he, 'Be hanged if any Frenchman cuts out his prize from him.' It is his plan that something might be done by way of an exchange for this young rascal, and I have here a letter for the Governor, and an order to take him with me when I make sail for Gibraltar.

"I should like you to see him," he went on to say. "He is on *parole* in Citta Vecchia. I am going to ride over there this morning, and tell him to hold himself in readiness to sail next week."

"No, I can't go, thank you," said Captain Warner, who in these expressions understood an invitation to accompany him, and was not altogether sure how far he was acting fairly by proxy towards his rival. "I have to pay my respects to the Governor."

"Well," replied Annesley, "if he joins me when I sail, the coast is clear for you."

"Warner! ahoy! Warner!" He called after his friend; who with a few rapid strides had almost got beyond hail of him. "You must dine with us to-day at our rooms in Floriania. Half-past five, mind, and Mrs. Annesley will accept of no excuses."

“Nothing can be further from my thoughts than to excuse myself to Mrs. Annesley.”

It was the turning point of Captain Warner's destiny.

CHAPTER VI.

Gather the roses while ye may,
Old Time is still a-flying,
The fairest flower that blooms to-day
To-morrow may be dying.—HERRICK.

It was a beautiful May morning. The north-east breeze was gently breathing odors from the flowery shores of Sicily, where gloomy Dis seized his unwilling bride: it was the commencement of the Maltese summer, but as yet the glare reflected from the stone walls and shadeless plains of the grey rock, was not intolerable. The temperature of Valetta itself is almost always equable, and at the pleasant spot near the Palace of the former Grand Inquisitor, not far from which Dr. Glascock's country residence was built, near the centre of the southern shore of the island, the heat was scarcely greater than that of an English spring. The landscape that here presented itself was not altogether dissimilar to that of certain of our less cultivated districts.

At the south-west portion of the island is a double line of cliffs; the outer one rising from the sea, and sloping inward, till the freestone wall of the second line abruptly flanks the valley. It was upon this cultivated slope at its lower and eastern end, and looking up the hollow formed by the chain of rocky hills that almost bisects Malta (dividing it into two nearly equal portions—the eastern thickly populated, and the western a Petrea), that Dr. Glascock had erected his small country house, and surrounded it with orange trees. The road to this retreat led through the prettiest and most cultivated landscape in all Malta. The plains and gentle declivities were rich with crops of grain and fodder, amongst which fields of *sulla*, gay with large

red flowers, were particularly beautiful and conspicuous. All were surrounded with stone walls, coeval with the field's creation. The peasant, in making a grooved bed for the two or three feet thickness of earth scraped from the fissures of the rocks, or brought occasionally from Sicily, removed large fragments of the porous rock and made his wall of them. "How admirable is God's Providence!" cries a pious Maltese writer; "no sooner is a field formed than on that very spot lie the materials to raise around it the defence that it requires!"

The steep acclivities of the hill sides presented a succession of terraces, which, rising rapidly one above the other, suggested to the beholder the idea of seats in a vast amphitheatre; whilst the curved lines of the opposite hills strengthened the impression. These little terraces were prettily planted with fruit trees, especially the apple and the vine, which being trained together, intermingled their branches; for having been carefully pruned and kept low, few even of the apple trees were larger than mere shrubs. In full bloom at the time, and covering so considerable an extent of ground, they presented a singular appearance, broken as the cultivation was, at intervals, by ridges of gray limestone; whilst on the right, lay the lovely valley of Boschetto, crowned with its quadrangular castle, a spot which is now laid out in groves of fruit trees, oranges, lemons, or pomegranates, and, there only, the dark olive, once, it is supposed, the indigenous product of the isle.

Winding between the hill-slopes, on the one side, and the entrance to the valley, is the hard, white road, running southwards from Valetta, passing through Citta Vecchia, the ancient capital of the island, now silent and deserted like an enchanted city. In 1809, it still retained some portion of its splendor; and was the residence on *parole* of a small number of French officers, who, later in the war, well nigh fell victims to the fanaticism and resentment of the lower orders.

It was at the close of the Sunday afternoon mentioned in the last chapter of our story, that Captain Felix Guiscard rode at full speed to Ramalah.

An hour earlier, Amabel, descending to the garden, had gathered her lap full of sweet flowers, more richly perfumed

it is said, in Malta, than elsewhere. Holding her poor aunt by the hand, and accompanied as usual by her little white dog, Barba, she climbed over a broken portion of the wall, which inclosed the garden of the Doctor; went slowly down the hill behind his cottage, and stood at the eastern extremity of the cliffs, beside the sea.

Whither had flown her former doubts of life? She doubted not her happiness, for perfect love casts out all fear. Alas! alas! that dread mistrustfulness will after first deception follow on such fearlessness! Alas! that tender hearts, well capable of warm affection, should, early wounded, grow defiant; that caustic words, and a curled lip, and Rochefoucauld philosophy, should be the signs that half the so-called love on earth is false, and that the unhappy one has learned to mask her fears, her wrongs, her helplessness, by simulated fearlessness. If it be real, it is the fearlessness of that poor, widowed, fallen Queen, when, passing out of the low wicket of the Temple, on her way to the Conciergerie, she struck her "grey, discrowned head" against its lintel, and answered the rough inquiries of her jailor with the saddest words, that, perhaps, ever have been uttered by a woman's lips: "Nothing can hurt me now."

But we will not linger on such thoughts, for, as yet, they have nothing in common with our subject. In Amabel, all thoughts were swallowed up in a sensation that pervaded her whole being, that Felix Guiscard loved her. She had no anxiety to hear him say it. The most impassioned words could have added no certainty to her mind. She knew their lives, to be happy, must be passed together: to be complete, must be united. She was as necessary to him, as he to her. She had no thought for the future—the present had absorbed it, together with the past. Or rather, the past was but the prelude to the present; the future, the guarantee for its continuance.

Her eyes were fixed upon the path over the cliffs, which led from the main road to the shelving shore; and the moment he appeared, she caught sight of him. She ran to meet him; more joyous, more childlike, than usual, for a fresh, free air was blowing, which had given her high spirits and a high color.

She wore, as she always did, the costume of the country; her hands and feet were of more than Maltese beauty, and the peculiar fashion in which her dark hair was strained into the sugar-loaf form, back from her forehead, though not in itself beautiful or natural, gave a brilliancy to her eyes, and a piquancy to the fair young face, so expressive in its beauty, that was perfectly bewitching to those accustomed only to the totally dissimilar style of countenance sought to be produced by the fashions of the times. Over her head she wore the black silk *faldetta*, of Moorish or Saracenic origin; which thrown back, looked like a classical, wide, floating mantle, but when she walked, was twisted gracefully on one side, and drawn so as to cover the lower part of her face. The skirt of her wide robe was black, but opening on one side, gave to view the ample, snowy petticoat; and the corset, also black, stiffened with whalebone, and laced over the graceful figure, whose outline seemed to have been rounded by the softest touches of Dame Nature's hand, gave something the appearance of a modern court dress to the costume.

The *faldetta*, her black mantle, blew out sail-like behind her as she ran, embarrassing her movements, and causing her to stop every few moments and draw it closer round her bright and rosy features. Felix stretched out both his hands, and as she placed hers in them, the *faldetta* blew forwards, enveloped his head, and the hood held two faces. What wonder that, under its friendly screen, his lips met her forehead.

It was two hours later when Dr. Glascock, having risen from a leisurely *siesta*, mounted to the top of the acclivity, on the side of which his house stood. At first his eyes rested on a vessel in the offing, with all her white sails glistening as she glided across a golden path that paved the waters to the setting sun.

The "tideless Mediterranean" rises nevertheless a few feet morning and evening, during the months of spring and autumn, above its usual level. It was now nearly high water, and along the foot of the cliffs lay a mere margin of white sand, sloping gently out of which rose a large rock, once

Bella's favorite retreat for study or for solitude, now dearest of all places upon earth, from the memory of hours she and Felix had there passed, shut in from prying eyes, the blue sea murmuring at their feet, the grey cliffs sheltering their heads.

Upon this rock it was that they stood, the flowers she had brought had fallen from her lap, and now lay scattered round them. He seemed in act to go, yet lingering still; as loath not to prolong that "sweetest sorrow of the parting words." At sight of them the Doctor, with all speed, began his descent from the ridge of the acclivity, but a sudden bend in the steep path hid them for a moment from his view.

When Doctor Glascock next caught sight of the young lovers, Felix had renounced his purpose of departure. Amabel was sitting or half kneeling on the rock, and he had placed himself beside her.

"Bella, one word of answer!"

Her eyes turned pleadingly to Doctor Glascock. Her lover knew that she thus mutely told him that the happiness of which he had been speaking, hung on the consent of others.

He rose, and eagerly addressed the Doctor. As Amabel's nearest protector and guardian, he implored his blessing on their union, and that it might be speedily; that he might carry her with him if he returned to France, and restore her to her father's home.

"I have no such authority as you suppose," replied the Doctor. "Mademoiselle is under the guardianship of her uncle. You must gain the consent of Mr. Sibbes."

"Then, Felix," cried Amabel, starting up with sudden animation, "refuse this terrible exchange on any plea you like, and stay in Malta. My uncle will not be back from Smyrna till October, and meantime"—

Captain Guiscard shook his head, but Dr. Glascock interrupted his reply to Amabel's bright hopes. "Go up to the house," he said, "and we will come to you in half an hour. I must have some talk on this with Capt. Guiscard."

She rose up and obeyed him. The wind had lulled. Both watched her light figure, till in one of the windings of the path it disappeared, when the Doctor turned to the Captain

with a remark not to have been expected from one of his cynicism and years.

"She loves you, sir," he said. "No man can doubt that! She loves you, sir;—she loves you."

The words seemed wrung from him by an extremity of emotion.

"I have entire trust in her affection," was the answer.

"And you may have in her constancy. Hers is one of those clinging natures which cannot detach themselves, even from a common friend, without leaving a part of life itself behind. Some persons, Captain Guiscard, dissociate themselves as they are from themselves *as they were* or *as they hope to be*. Progressive natures, on the contrary, cherish the memories of the past, because they see in them the germ of the present, and prophecies of the future, nor can they live without a prospect in life before them. *You* are associated with her past, in *you* are centred all her visions of the future—you are her life. Were her future existence to be severed from you by accident or treachery, she would live indeed, and in time recover herself I trust, but every hope, taste, and affection, which embellish life, would long be bruised, sickly, and imperfect in her."

"Do you intend, sir," he resumed after a pause, "to give up your exchange, and wait for Mr. Sibbes in Malta?"

"That would not be possible. My honor as an officer—my devotion to my country—my professional prospects—all forbid my making use of any false plea of ill health," began Captain Guiscard.

"Enough, sir. I knew that you would *not*. Be it my task, therefore, to make Mr. Sibbes favorable to your hopes, and to receive security for your good faith from you."

"Security!"

"Most certainly. If you leave Malta, have we any certainty that in your active changeful life you will form no other hopes—love no other pretty woman?"

And without regarding the fervent protestations poured out by the young lover, he went on to insist on this *security*.

"You are attached to her, you say. That is between you and her. You say you love her; but, sir, is Mr. Sibbes, whose

ideas are all pecuniary, to be satisfied to have his niece remain unmarried in his house on such security? Are you sure that in the end his arguments would have no weight with Amabel?

"*Bon dieu!* you torture me. What would you have me do, *M. le docteur?*"

"Offer the man security for your fidelity, of a nature that he can understand. Bind Amabel to constancy by her honor as well as her affection."

"And how?"

"Those Breton lands you hold, wrung, by the devices of revolutionary times, by your father the intendant, from her father the noble, restored to her by deed of gift, would secure all these advantages. At the end of the war, you might reclaim both wife and property. Mr. Sibbes could not object to a suitor who had already made such sacrifices. Bella could never doubt your tried fidelity; you would have acquired new claims on her affection by your sacrifice."

With a sort of weak generosity he meant to secure to her the object of her choice. At the worst, he gave her the inheritance of her fathers, and for himself, if he must lose her (and he saw but too clearly that all his early claims upon her love had lost their force) better a Frenchman should win her than an Englishman; better Felix than Captain Warner.

"The father in *L'Amour-Médecin*," thought he to himself, "spoke not unwisely when he lamented the hard fate of those who bring up female children, only to see them, at the age when they have grown most useful, most desirable, most companionable, pass into the hands of a stranger."

"I see that my proposition is distasteful to you," he resumed, having, during the pause, closely watched the other's features. "Nevertheless, it is the price of my influence with her uncle. Nay, sir," (for Felix was about to speak) "we will not chaffer, if you please, over such a bargain."

He began ascending to his house with some rapidity. Felix followed him, lost in thought. He saw that his only real security for his own happiness or the safety of his patrimony, if he did what Dr. Glascock required, was the affection of Amabel.

But he had full trust in her. He saw her in the glow of setting sunlight, standing on the cliffs above the house and looking down. He fancied she was weeping, and he would have "coined his heart and dropped his blood to drachmas" could gold have stayed the tear-drops that fell from those bright eyes. He hastened his steps; he overtook the doctor. he overtook the doctor.

"Will you give me time, sir?" he said. "Give me till to-morrow, that I may make sure I have understood the instructions of Captain Annesley."

He ran up the cliff to join her. He told her—not the price he was to pay—but that the doctor was their friend and their protector. He told her how he trusted her and loved her; and every word he said awoke its echoes in her heart, repeated and multiplied.

"To-morrow!" he said, parting at length.

"To-morrow!" she answered. "To-morrow—dear to-morrow!"

She walked with him to the spot where he had left his horse. He was glad to escape a second meeting with the doctor; and, with a heart less light than that with which he had left Citta Vecchia, he rode more slowly back to it as evening fell.

He had not ridden half a mile from Ramalah, when he became aware that her dog, who had taken a great fancy to him, was following him.

As he passed through Citta Vecchia, he stopped a moment at the residence of the English officer, then on duty, to obtain permission to pass the night in Valetta, as he had business to transact there. On his arrival at Valetta he put up his horse at an inn with which he was acquainted, in the suburbs, ordered a bed, and then set out in search of Captain Annesley.

It was half past ten o'clock. No moon. The night was clondy. The scanty lamps burned dim. Felix turned into the street where Captain Annesley had taken lodgings, and found it quite deserted. Not a living soul appeared to be abroad.

CHAPTER VII.

He who too far indulges hope,
Will find how soon hope fails;
He's like a seaman bottling wind
In hopes to fill his sails.

TRANSLATION OF A MALTESE SONG.

"MR. GRUMP," said Captain Warner, coming on board the Dodo in no good humor, about the hour Captain Felix Guiscard set out for Ramalah. "Mr. Grump, we are to sail again to-night with a devil of a French spy on board, whom the Admiral has ordered me to take to join Sir John Warren in Sicily. Have his cot slung in my cabin. He will mess at my table. You will receive him when he comes on board, and take care of him. He is a personage of importance, with particular news for the army in Sicily. His name is Girard. I shall be on board by nine. I am going to dine on shore with Captain Annesley."

Mr. Grump, left in command of the vessel, paced the quarter-deck in dudgeon, remembering that he too had an engagement in Valetta, and that the second lieutenant having had leave to go ashore, it would be out of rule for him to quit the ship upon the eve of sailing.

As the evening advanced, however, and there appeared nothing particular for him to do, he made up his mind to intrust his command to the officer of the watch for half an hour, the acting junior lieutenant, my father, Theodosius Ord, and taking a boat, was landed on the Marina. He stayed longer than he had intended, for a friend detained him over a pleasant bottle. It wanted a quarter of nine when he returned to the vessel. Theodosius met him at the gangway.

"Mr. Grump, is that you, sir?"

"Yes, sir."

"Have you seen anything of Mr. Girard, sir?"

"Mr. Girard, sir?"

"Yes, sir—the French spy. He came on board just after you left, sir, in one of the boats from the flag-ship, and as it was only seven o'clock he asked leave to go ashore and get his kit. I gave him leave, sir."

"The devil you did, sir! And I, sir, am responsible to Captain Warner. Did you know he was a person of importance, sir? Do you know I can be broke for this by a court-martial?" cried the lieutenant, jumping back into his boat with angry gestures towards his junior.

"Hang it! I am very sorry, sir. He must be on board soon, sir, I think. He promised me, in less than an hour," was Theodosius's answer.

"On board again!" repeated Mr. Grump disdainfully. "Do you suppose, sir, that he'll come on board again? It is a stratagem on his part, and if I can't catch him in half an hour I shall order you under an arrest, sir."

So saying, Mr. Grump pushed off again from the Dodo, and swore at Theodosius all the way across the harbor.

By the time he landed, his wine and his vexation had put him quite beside himself. He rushed into every sailors' shop in the Marina, making incoherent inquiries.

"Anybody know a Frenchman? A French spy living in Valetta? a Frenchman! a Frenchman! a Monsieur Girard! a man who landed from the Dodo about two hours ago?"

"Go this way," said one. "Try that way," said another. Poor Grump in despair dashed, at the head of his boat's crew, up the principal street of Valetta. Some one (he questioned every man he met) had told him there was a Frenchman living in Floriana. Thither he went, and having no definite ideas of the geography of that locality, happened to strike into the quiet street where Captain Annesley had taken lodgings, just as Felix Guiscard reached his door.

"Ahoy there! you!" cried the lieutenant. "What is the way out of this street? Do you know any Frenchman in this neighborhood?"

"*Comment, monsieur?*" said Captain Guiscard.

"Come along. I am in chase of you, sir. You're my man,"

cried the lieutenant. "What are you doing here? What did you go ashore for? Is your name Girard, sir?"

"I am *le Capitaine Guiscard*," said the other, who, whether he understood the last question or not, thought it better to declare himself.

"Guiscard! Hang their French pronunciation. The captain called it Girard.* Never mind; it's all the same. Come along with me, sir; you are the man I want," poured forth the lieutenant, pressed for time, overjoyed at the *rencontre*, and with his brain a good deal fuddled.

Felix had mastered a few words of Italian during his two residences in Malta, but could not speak a syllable of English. Nevertheless he endeavored to remonstrate.

"Collar him! Take hold of him! Gag him! Make him be quiet, men!" cried the lieutenant, shouting into his ear the two words most likely to be understood and to explain the business, "Captain Warner of the Dodo; Captain Warner!"

Still Felix struggled. Windows were opening in the street; there was no time for ceremony. One of the sailors stuffed a ball of rope-yarn into his mouth; his arms were seized and pinioned. Four stout men lifted him off his feet, and, at a word from the lieutenant, all the party, followed by the dog, dashed down hill at full speed to the Marina. Felix was stowed in the boat with little ceremony, and the Dodo's men pulled off to join their vessel. She had weighed anchor; she was working out into the Great Harbor. Mr. Grump stood up in the stern sheets, and exhorted his men to "give way," to pull harder.

"Aye, aye, sir."

And the little boat skimmed over the dark water, for the night was clouded, as we said. Before them all was black; but the bright lights of the harbor, shining like stars in an inverted sky, were gleaming in the path behind.

Felix, stunned, gagged, and bewildered, lay in the bottom of the boat, and gazed at them. Hope lay behind: every mo-

* A similar mistake occurred, during the last war, in Mahon harbor.

ment bore him swiftly to an unknown future—doubt, distress, and darkness.

They have come up with the Dodo. Again Theodosius meets them at the gangway.

"I have him," cried the lieutenant, springing on board. "Hand up that Frenchman."

"Have who?" cried Theodosius, hoarsely.

"The spy—your M. Girard. What's his name? Guiscard. You pronounced it wrong, my boy," replied the other.

"Mr. Grump, it is the wrong man, sir. The right one came on board just after you left. We shall have two of them on board, sir."

"Don't speak too loud," continued he, as the lieutenant burst upon him with a volley of execration. "I thought it best to say nothing to the captain."

"Hoist him up here in the boat. He'll be safe there for the present, and throw my boat cloak over him," said Grump to the seamen who were bringing his prisoner over the side; and, without further concern at present for his fate, he went down to report himself to Captain Warner. The captain was in good humor, drinking wine and talking French with M. Girard. The lieutenant escaped his reprimand, and had so much to do for some hours, in attention to his duties, that it was not till all hands, save the watch, had turned in for the night, that he had time to feel troubled as to the consequences of his adventure. As he paced the quarter-deck, he observed something to leeward of the vessel.

He opened his night-glass, and found they were running close down upon a boat of that kind called, in the Mediterranean, a *speronara*. It is a sort of shallop without deck, from twenty-four to thirty feet in length, manned by a crew of seven Maltese sailors—the captain, or patron, and six rowers. He hailed it; the *Padrone* answered him, and, in a few minutes, she was dragging alongside the Dodo. She proved to be the *Santa Maria degli Angeli*, engaged in carrying cattle from Sicily to Malta. She had about fifteen head on board, lashed to the thwarts or benches.

The lieutenant, hanging over his vessel's side, soon made an

agreement, by signs, with the *Padrone*, who understood he was to receive a passenger, and land him within a few hours at Malta.

Mr. Grump trusted that, even if the story of the kidnapping got abroad in Valetta, he would be able to represent it so humorously in an after-dinner conversation with the captain, when the consequences were all remedied and the affair had aged, that he would get off himself without anything worse than a cautionary reprimand. And, after all, a few hours' fright to a Frenchman and a prisoner could have little importance to the government authorities.

He called to an old sea dog who was near him, and together they dragged Captain Guiscard out of the boat, his hands still tied and his mouth stuffed with rope-yarn. The *speronara's* crew received him at the gangway. The lieutenant, with his own hands, cast off the *Santa Maria*, making signs to the *Padrone* to unbind his prisoner, as soon as he was beyond hearing of the Dodo. The *Padrone* jingled together some silver given him for the service, and stood up in his boat making signs of intelligence and bows. The lieutenant watched the little craft as she worked her way into the thick darkness, and congratulated himself on his good luck and dexterity. The affair might be spoken of, very likely, in the fore-castle, but would never from that quarter make its way to Captain Warner.

CHAPTER VIII.

Helas ! Il m'a donc fui sans me laisser de trace,
 Mais pour le retenir j'ai fait ce que j'ai pu,
 Ce temps ou le bonheur brille et aoudain s'efface
 Comme un sourire interrompu.—VICTOR HUGO

“NEWNESS of life!” In their general, their highest acceptance, these words have a scriptural and theological meaning, but the historian of the heart may borrow the expression, for

it designates exactly that change which passes over the whole being on the first certainty of loving and being loved. A sister will sometimes hardly recognise the companion of her nursery, her studies, her girlhood's hopes and joys, when this great change has taken place, and the happy one has found even her own past life look strange to her.

But to Amabel—the loving and the lonely—whose life had latterly been aimless (discontent had not grown upon her simply because she understood no happier lot,) to be so loved, so blessed, with such a perspective view of future happiness opened suddenly before her, embodying at once the realization of every dream of her childhood, however wild; of every yearning of her heart in later years, however vague; the *newness of life* that broke upon her was overwhelming in its strangeness and immensity. It was many hours deep into the night before she sought her pillow;—she spent them walking backwards and forwards in her chamber, with her hands clasped and her eyes beaming, her smile satisfied and proud. She could not definitely fix her thoughts on any speculations for the future, or reminiscences of happiness, but mechanically, almost without perception of their meaning, out of the very fulness of her heart, her lips kept on repeating words that *he* had said to her, so strange—so new—so beautiful.

The language of love is the only language understood when heard for the first time; and she had heard it and had spoken it a few hours before, as the shadows of the night crept over them, and they sat together on the green hill-side alone.

And then again she would fall down on her knees beside her bed, or near the window, and pour forth the fulness of her heart, thanking God, who had given her such happiness; for, ignorant as she was of forms, and creeds, and doctrines (barriers wisely set around our faith to prevent the encroachments of mysticism into religion), it was the voice of nature that proclaimed that love is God's best gift; that its tendency, till the soils of earth pollute it, is to lead upward to the Giver; that happiness is the state in which man may best serve his Creator here, as he served him in Eden, and shall hereafter serve Him in the courts of heaven.

Yet who knows, if she had married as she desired and expected, how long this loving happiness would have endured? Though her beloved and herself, for a few months or a few years, might have merged their individualities together, so as, indeed, to be but of one heart and of one mind—that period in married life must have come to them, as it comes to all, when differences of character, of views and tastes, must have jarred upon their happiness; when each would have discovered the other was not perfect, when *allowances* on each side would have been called for, when, for the first time, must have been entertained by each a vague feeling of the possibility of future disunion and unhappiness. Was their love of such a nature as to stand firm and come purified, triumphant, and enlarged out of these trials? Was it so founded as to be likely to gather principle in hours of happiness wherewith it might withstand the threatening aspect of a darker day?

In misty rain broke that desired *to-morrow*. Dr. Glascock did not go into Valetta. He sat with gloomy face and watched the clouds hanging low over his dwelling. Amabel wandered about the house from window to window, straining her sight to catch a glimpse of the high road through the thick mist that surrounded them,

Watching afar, if yet her lover's steed
Kept pace with her expectancy, and flew :

endeavoring, through all her anxiety and the sickening nervous feeling which follows upon long and eager often deluded expectation, to excuse the tardiness of him who disappointed her.

"Doctor," she said at length, "did he say he would be early? There may be such a little time before he leaves us, doctor!"

"My child," said the doctor, rising and coming up to the window where she stood, "have you taken the idea that the mere talk of idle hours is the true expression of love? To try the love a man professes for you, Bella, you had better touch his pocket. The pocket tests mankind."

Bella looked inquiringly.

"I have put him to this proof. I made a proposition to him last evening to settle upon you his portion of those estates your father held in Brittany."

Anger glowed over Amabel's bright face; the pent up vexation and excitement of expectation of the morning burst forth against the doctor. The vehemence of its expression positively alarmed him. She almost wept away her senses at the thought that Felix should have been insulted for her sake. She was sure that he could not forgive her; that was the reason he had not come.

Evening fell, and she was half distracted.* There was no post across the island, and no communication with the world without had taken place that day. Miserable Amabel! Felix she felt was angry—the doctor angry—and her poor aunt, more exacting than usual, on account of the confinement to the house occasioned by the weather, was made fretful and capricious by an inattention to her pleasures, the cause of which she could not understand.

The heavy rain still fell, and Bella early sobbed herself to sleep, exhausted by emotion. Yet the innermost conviction of her little aching heart was secretly that Felix would be with her by the dawn, and the last employment of her thoughts was to imagine for him excuses; to frame some probable cause for his delay, which should make up to her tenfold for this day's disappointment by the additional prospect of happiness in store for her upon the morrow.

She was awakened by the clatter of horse's hoofs at the early dawn of morning. Starting up, she flew to her little window, and saw—not the brown horse that carried Felix coming up to the garden gate—but the broad, black flanks and flapping tail of Dr. Glascock's pony, urged down the road at a quick pace.

Her screams brought in Giacinta.

"Has anything happened? Has any messenger been here?"

"No, signorina. *E partito di buon ora il Signor Dottore.*"

Day of agony made still more dreadful than the dreadful yesterday, by glad, bright, mocking sunshine!

About three o'clock came back the doctor. He dismounted at the gate, came into the house slowly, hung up his hat and cloak on their accustomed pegs, walked into the drawing-room (she had not dared to go and meet him), and took both her

hands in his. She saw he had ill news, and her speech failed her.

"He was a traitor—worthless—unworthy, my poor child. He is better gone. Don't mourn for him," said the doctor.

She fell senseless on the floor—senseless at his feet. She read the certainty of her fate in his compassion. It was hours before she could make inquiries, or would suffer herself to be told that, together with his vows to her, his promises to the doctor, he had broken his *parole*, and had left Malta, no one knew how, no one knew whither. His horse had been put up in a stable in Valetta; no accident, therefore, had befallen him, and he had been seen, by one who knew him, on foot, in a retired part of Floriana.

Some persons remembered, about ten o'clock, a bustle in the street, but the night was dark, and to those who looked out of their windows, all was undistinguishable.

The doctor had been into his chamber at Citta Vecchia. No money was there, and he was known to have received of Captain Annesley, the day before, a sum not inconsiderable.

Dr. Glascock was astonished at the firmness with which Bella insisted on *her right* to investigate, personally and thoroughly, all that made against her lover. She went with him next day to Citta Vecchia and to Valetta; visited his rooms, questioned the neighbors, made inquiries on the Marina. She there learned from the boatmen the agitation of Mr. Grump upon that evening, and his frantic inquiries after a Frenchman.

A glimmering vision of the truth broke in upon her. "We shall have *certainty* when Captain Warner comes into port," she said once to the doctor. But she seldom spoke to others of her hope; it was too fragile for the rough touch with which they handled it; too dear to be profaned.

The excitement that had sustained her in the first days of her loss, vanished speedily away. The affair was a nine days' wonder in Valetta; but, though the admiral and governor were very angry, and the French prisoners upon *parole* were more strictly watched than they had been before, all interest upon the subject was exhausted by the time that Captain Annesley, of the Sea Gull, sailed to join the Gibraltar squadron.

Those around Amabel lapsed into their usual state of feeling, and expected her to do the same.

But in vain; the days of her sweet loving trustfulness,—the days of her first youth were over. Happen what might around her she could never be the same again. Sometimes a burst of passionate, fierce grief, like an ocean-storm in suddenness and fury, would take the doctor by surprise, and make him fear, if not for her reason, for her future peace. He was wrong; it is despair, taking the common form of indifference of heart, that is so dangerous, not the half-civilized wild cry of a strong nature. And her eyes would then grow bright with latent fever, her movements would be hurried and impulsive, her temper capricious, her attention difficult, almost impossible to engage.

To this mood would succeed another—its *contre-coup*, its reaction—when she would bitterly bewail her starts of passion, and think of herself as one deserving the loss of every blessing for the ingratitude with which this sorrow was received.

Then she would hide her troubles in her heart, and try to go forth as she had done in her days of hope and gladness, to interest herself in others' griefs, and so forget her own; but the attempt was but a cold effort of duty. The life had fled from her exertions; we can do no good thing to others when we seek them *for our own sake*, and the remedy must fail even for ourselves.

Another phase in her distress fell temporarily upon her. She recovered herself suddenly. Her step regained its former elasticity; her lip a proud and fierce, though not a happy smile. Her eyes still burned with an unusual brightness, but a drooping of their lids sometimes relieved the glare. She had laid aside her sorrows for a time, and had resigned herself to the conviction that Felix *must be true*. That her trust in him was too strong to be shaken by the power of circumstances. That he must come back,—what matter with what interval of years?—to explain all that had happened, and to claim her love. In the midst of this mood of feverish hope, the Dodo came back into the harbor of Valetta. It was October. Dr. Glascock had moved his household to the city to meet Mr. Sibbes,

who was expected home from Smyrna, and old Giacinta brought Amabel word the moment the desired vessel was made out from Fort Riascoli. Amabel heard her with an unchanging smile—without interrupting her occupation. The doctor had gone that morning across the island. All day she betrayed no sign of emotion or impatience.

At noon Captain Warner was announced. She received him, and entered upon the usual topics of the day. He said nothing of Felix. Her heart began to fail her, and she had less courage than ever to venture the inquiry; but the thought came that they both thus cruelly might be preparing her a surprise. At that moment Dr. Glascock entered. "Captain," he said, "a word with you," and drew him apart to a window. "I am anxious to inquire whether you took a Frenchman, Captain Guiscard, to the coast of Sicily?"

"Monsieur Girard? I did, sir; a mighty pleasant fellow."

"Was he your only French passenger?"

"Yes, sir," said the captain, with surprise. He had not yet heard of the mysterious disappearance of his rival.

"Favor me by describing Monsieur Girard."

"A short man, middle-aged, thick-necked, with a wound over his left eye."

The doctor asked no more. The captain turned to take his leave. Amabel did not rise, or take the least notice of his departure. She had comprehended the conversation; and, when the doctor spoke to her, she looked up in his face smiling, and sat playing with the trimmings that were sewn upon her robe.

Oh! breaking heart that will not break,

Orisoa.

Oh! pale, pale face, so sweet and meek,

Oriana.

Thou smilest, but thou dost not speak,

And then the tears run down my cheek,

What warest thou? Whom dost thou seek,

Oriana?

From that time not a word escaped her on the subject of her sorrow. Perhaps sometimes a half thought of reproach to Felix may have crossed her mind; but, so far from giving utterance

to it, the dread lest her changed looks should seem to others to reproach him, was her strongest motive for exertion. Oh! the subtleties of true affection! How into the least of things creeps woman's love!

The sun of her existence was put out. She was groping her way in life through darkness. The roses in the crown of her youth had been broken, and were faded. The world danced on around the shrine of hope, but she had drawn back into solitude and silence, a spectator of the throng.

Her tears fell in the long nights, and they seemed to fall in vain; for, as yet, they watered not the ground for the reception of a better, more enduring kind of household love and trustful happiness. They gushed from rock, they were drunk in by the sands of a desert; for, like a dusty whirlwind of the wilderness, this sorrow had passed over her, burying the bright oasis of her life in desolation. No pleasures, no remembrances, no hopes, no fears, and, worst of all, no loving interest in others, no kind affections seemed to have escaped the ruin. Her passion had drunk up the streams of lovingness that had fertilized her life and watered her own soul. *That* choked or flowing underground, she had none left for others. If she wept for others' griefs, it was because they called to mind her own.

And the *Santa Maria degli Angeli* lay at anchor in the harbor or made her winter voyages to Sicily; and Mr. Grump kept his own counsel during the few days the Dodo stayed in port, reflecting that nothing called on him to declare his blunder, and that, as the prisoner had not been returned to Malta, the consequences might be more serious than he had at first anticipated.

As the spring came, Mrs. Sibbes's health grew worse. Amabel watched over her, and waited on her with a sort of mechanical attention. She had an affection for her aunt, but it was not of a nature to attract many of her thoughts from the absorbing subject that occupied her mind. Yet, when the sufferer was dead, and she knelt beside the coffin, her grief was made more bitter by the reproaches of that affection. It whispered to her night and day that, carefully and laboriously as her daily duties to the lost had been performed, her heart had not been in them.

No sooner was the funeral over than Mr. Sibbes resolved to part with Amabel. Business called him to the East, and he could not leave her with propriety, under the care of the doctor. He would have preferred that she should marry in Malta; but, as she showed no disposition to do this, he determined to return her to her mother's care. Lady Karnac was living at a country town upon the eastern coast of England with her husband, Captain Talbot, and her children by this marriage. Scarcely anything was known of them by the family in Malta, but Mr. Sibbes wrote word he should be with them speedily, and sailed for England with his niece early in the spring.

I am inclined to think that Dr. Glascock tried every means in his power to induce her to remain in Malta; that, in short, he pressingly offered himself to her, and that this offer and its rejection caused a coolness between them. The doctor, however, says nothing on either of these points in his narrative.

With the restlessness of youthful sorrow (for the young hope often to cheat grief, as the sick cheat pain, by a change of position) Amabel was glad to go to England. New scenes, new duties, new hopes, and new relationships, would put the apathy of her heart, she thought, to trial. She would learn thereby whether her life was to be henceforth anything more than one long, vain regret for the loss of earthly happiness, and whether there were other things worth living for or no.

END OF PART FIRST.

Part Second.

DRAWN CHIEFLY, FROM AMABEL'S OWN LETTERS
ADDRESSED TO CAPTAIN WARNER.

Yet as happiness in domestic life must depend mainly on the personal influences of those around us, our power of cultivating that happiness must depend very considerably on our understanding the nature of such influences. With partial exception it may be said that all great personal influences are mutual, and are derived from the sympathetic power which we have for the expressed feelings of another.—SPECTATOR, 1847. *Article on the Duchesse de Praslin.*

PART II.

CHAPTER I.

Sweet flower of Hope ! free Nature's genial child,
That did'st so fair disclose thine early bloom,
Filling the wide air with its rich perfume,
For thee in vain all heavenly aspects smiled,
From the hard world brief respite could they win ;
The frost nipped sharp without, the canker preyed within.

COLERIDGE.

"I HAVE spoken to you freely of what I felt on leaving Malta," says Amabel herself, in a letter that she wrote in after years to Captain Warner, "and I would do so also of my first impressions of England, not because they have any direct bearing on the matter immediately before us, or that in themselves they are likely to afford you interest, but because fully to appreciate my position in the new home to which my duty called me, you must bear in mind my previous way of life, and the circumstances in which I was placed, and look upon the aspect of things around me, less as they really were, than from the point of view in which it was natural I should regard them."

The voyage was tedious, and without events, at least nothing that she saw at sea made any powerful impression, but her sensibilities were blunted by the indulgence of her sorrow, and nothing had power to rouse her, save to a sharper poignancy of regret.

A long monotonous sea voyage was the very thing for sobering an active grief into a settled one ; no one on board claimed any of her sympathy, she asked for none of theirs, still, as the only lady in the vessel, she was petted and courted, as had always been the case, but nothing whispered that it

was *the last time* in her life she should be spoiled to give it value, and these advantages in her position made at that time little impression.

They stood along the English coast for two days after entering the Channel; on the third, being close in shore, a fishing boat came off to them. They were opposite to the little town of Worthing, and Mr. Sibbes resolved to land. The ship lay to; they were shifted with their luggage into the fishing boat, and the ship stood on her course towards the Downs.

Worthing was an insignificant collection of fishermen's huts at that period; one long thin line of better houses only, looming out of the morning haze. Half a mile from shore the boat of the customs came off to meet them, and with wetting, confusion, swearing, and not without, on the part of the fishing craft, what Mr. Sibbes damned as "English extortion," they were transferred into her. Bella was carried ashore through the surf on the stout back of an amphibious animal in jack-boots, whether man or woman she never could determine. Another plucked the earrings from her ears, a third soused her carpet-bag in the water, and when they found themselves on English ground under an escort of the revenue officials, Mr. Sibbes dragging her by the hand, pushing, swearing, and pursued for sixpences, she was roused to sensations that were extremely disagreeable.

"Cabined, cribbed, confined" in an inn parlor, the curtains of which had not been taken down for half a century, harboring dust and fusty smells, a smouldering fire smoking on the hearth—for though the month was June, the town was dampened by a dreary drizzle—the luggage gone in a taxed cart to be examined at the Custom House at Brighton—for contrary to the information of the fishermen, there were only officials and not offices at Worthing—and with a scanty English breakfast (thin chips of dry crisp toast, black tea, and an egg apiece before them), things looked to her (though English people might have called them *snug*) neither liberal, inviting, nor comfortable.

The luggage was kept a whole day at Brighthelmstone. Mr.

Sibbes, an easy man abroad, could not resist the influences of the climate, and a fit of English fussiness took hold upon him. At day-break Amabel was called. The morning happened to be fine, the country was green and beautiful. They put her into an old-fashioned, rattling, awkward, fusty, rickety post-chaise, which Mr. Sibbes agreed to share in a proportion of two thirds with a gentleman of Worthing, so Bella rode bod-kin all that day to London, along a road diversified by English country seats and English commons.

She remarked the deference paid to their gentry by all the inn people with whom she came in contact during that day's journey, nor had she ever occasion to alter the opinion then formed, that amongst the English peasantry and the class immediately above them, less real independence of opinion than amongst all other civilized people is to be found. Every man, while following the occupations of his class, tries to adopt the manners and opinions of the class above him. For which reason it is easy on occasion to lead the entire English nation by the nose.

On the whole, the great impression made upon her mind was that smallness indicated restraint, and that mutual dependence made classes look selfishly upon each other, instead of being the guarantee of feelings more kindly.

London was hot and hateful. They spent a night there, and the next day journeyed by coach into the eastern counties. Mr. Sibbes rode outside, Amabel within. The morning had been fair—the afternoon proved rainy. The perfect travelling arrangements, the smoothness of the roads, the greenness of the country, struck her much; but she probably made few general reflections, unless it may have been on the condition of society in England as typified by a fat woman, her companion, whose talk was all of lords, which made her fellow-traveller, who carried in her bag a volume of *Evelina*, imagine her some member of the aristocracy of England, so much were the private affairs and family histories of persons of that class at her tongue's end. The other two places were filled and emptied at most of the chief towns, sometimes by country gentlemen with white-top boots and strangely florid faces, once by a man disposed to be

disagreeably familiar, and several times damp children were thrust in, whose friends were slowly soaking in the rain outside.

It was dark without, weary within; the lamps were lighted and the streets were sloppy when they drove into the county town, half a seaport, yet not correctly so, for its boats are launched upon fresh water, where, for some years, the mother of Amabel had been living, together with her second family. The communication between mother and child had been so much interrupted, that Amabel was entirely ignorant of the present circumstances of the family; judging, however, from all that she had heard of her mother at the time of her second marriage, she fancied they must be people of consideration, and live in style. At the inn, where the coach stopped, her uncle Sibbes's good-natured face appeared at the coach door. She had been more drawn towards him during that day's journey than in all her life before.

"Get out, my dear," he said, "and come into the coffee-room. I have made an arrangement with the coachman to take off his leaders and take us on. They live in St. Clement's, half a mile through the town. I shall order my supper; for they won't want me with them at your first meeting. I am no favorite of your mother's, nor is she of mine."

These were the first words she had ever heard her uncle say about her parents. She looked round the cheerful coffee-room, and almost wished to stay and share the steak she heard him order.

"My dear," he said, coming back to the box, where she stood patiently. "My dear," fumbling in his pocket-book, "if you don't find yourself comfortable amongst your friends, my advice to you is—marry. You may let the world know that your marriage portion from me will be £10,000; that will procure you, any day, plenty of suitors. Take this, my dear," he added, pressing a £20 bank-note into her hand. "You may want it where you are going."

She threw herself upon his neck; she wept bitterly. She regretted she must leave him; she felt afraid of all that was to come. He was flustered by the action, and disengaged her

arms. At that moment the coachman called. She was put into the coach again, and they rattled with weary horses over the rough pavement of the back streets of the town. They stopped at a green door; her uncle Sibbes rang, and, after an interval, a maid in pattens, holding up her clothes, came down the sloppy flags and admitted them through the gate into the garden.

"Go in, child," said her uncle. "The coachman and I will bring your things in after you."

Springing past the maid, Amabel ran into the house through the wet garden, dashed into the first room that was at hand, and came upon the family.

"Gracious me!" exclaimed her mother. "Who are you? I thought it was Captain Talbot."

Bella made her understand who she was; she clasped her in her arms, and, for the first time in her remembrance, her heart beat against the heart of her mother.

The letter of Amabel dwells upon the first days of her arrival in England, as though it gave her pleasure to linger over her last recollections of her uncle Sibbes, but she grows less diffuse at this point of her narrative. It is easy to see that something pained her, and we gather that the first cause of her distress was the cavalier reception bestowed on Mr. Sibbes.

The trader, however, with a pride of his own, had no intention of staying long to be made uncomfortable by Lady Karnac's airs and insolence. He saw his niece's things safely deposited; wrung her hand; she threw her arms around his neck, and, in another moment, he was gone. Years and years passed before they met again; and, ere they did so, if we measure age by our experience in sorrow, she was far the older of the two. Lady Karnac was still a handsome woman, with beautiful hair, a slight lisp, constant complaints of ill health, and an expression of peevishness. She had been a great belle in her day, loved flirting and gay parties, saw no medium between flauntiness in dress and dowdiness, and could not forgive her husband, whose taste for speculation had dissipated their fortune, and had brought her down from the high estate where she was fitted to shine triumphantly, to live in a back

street of a small commercial town, where he held a patent in a manufactory.

They had four children. Olivia, the eldest, a large girl of fourteen, with a heavy looking face, of which the expression of sullen, settled ill-temper never varied. Almost idiotic as she looked, she had the influence of a strong will over her mother, a sagacity which always showed her an advantage, and a perseverance which enabled her to keep her ends in view, and to accomplish them. Annie, the second daughter, was a sickly child, cowed by her sister, made fretful by constant ailments, and obstinate and shy by the excess of her timidity. Edward was the pickle of the family; too audacious to be kept under by Olivia, too good at heart for her, as yet, to spoil. Little Joseph was the baby.

When people meet who ought to be intimate, yet have not seen each other for half their lives, they have nothing to say. There is no common point of interest from which to start a conversation, unless by bringing forward things set generally out of sight as too precious for common handling.

Olivia rang the bell with authority, and ordered tea. It was a long time coming, though she left the room to worry the slowness of their servant of all-work, and, when it did make its appearance, the smoked and tepid water, the stale half loaf of knobby bread, the children's clamor and untidy way of eating, Olivia's and the mother's slaps and scoldings, took the elder sister's appetite away. Alas! in her secret thoughts, she could not help contrasting that comfortless, noisy, miserable, tea-table, with the peace and plenty of her Maltese house.

By ten o'clock, after the servant had taken off the children, Captain Talbot's knock was heard at the hall door. He was a gentlemanly man, of middle height, with a slightly bald, and high, retreating forehead. He received Amabel with much kindness and cordiality, entering into conversation, and asking her questions upon Malta, the relations she had lived with, and her voyage, with the ease and tact of a man of the world.

Amabel felt more at her ease than she had yet done in her new home.

Why should we linger over the life, to which this was the

prophetic introduction? It is sad to trace the shadows creeping over a young and happy spirit, the growth of selfish feelings and their attendant evil thoughts, in the mind of one unused by nature or experience to be neglected or unloved. She was the one too many everywhere. There was no place for her in their hearts; there seemed no duties for her in their home. So soon as she attempted to win her way into the affections of the children, or to be useful to her mother, or to protect little Annie, to whom she "took" in preference to them all, Olivia's watchful jealousy strewed briars in her path, and some outbreak of bad feeling upon her part awakened echoes in her sister's mind. She never was alone; for she shared the sleeping-room of Olivia, and could not even lay her head upon her pillow and secretly weep bitter tears for her lost happiness; Olivia's ear was swift to hear, and those cutting taunts which it is beneath us to revenge, but which the greatest and most patient are not too great nor too patient to feel, were the price she paid for even this melancholy species of relief. Or worse, her mother would be informed of these repinings, and would take advantage of their next disagreement to inform her that, if she was too fastidious to be satisfied with her relations, she had better seek another home, or, better still, have stayed in Malta.

The twenty-pound note her uncle Sibbes had given her formed her greatest consolation. As long as it lasted she was able, by little presents, to gain favor even with Olivia, to procure books for herself and various little comforts, and lighten, in many ways, the lot of their poor servant girl. But twenty pounds is far from inexhaustible, and, by Christmas, it was spent, leaving her without pocket money, and dependent on her mother's purse even for her clothes. Then it was she learned the value of money, and felt as if an ample fortune would almost of itself suffice to make her happy.

Her ideas of happiness were now much changed, from what they were in better times. To "flee away and be at rest" from the wear and tear of evil feelings, excited or endured; to be free again to do, or think, or weep, or speak, and not under thralldom to Olivia; to have power to help the suffering; to be placed in a position where her enjoyment of even the lesser

things of life might be unmarred by a conflict of feelings, now seemed to her a degree of happiness she never should enjoy. And after every annoyance, every quarrel, or humiliation, her tears flowed faster from the thought, that had Felix been true to her, these things would not have been.

Yes, she distrusted Felix; that sorrow was the worst of all. She was growing, as Dr. Glascock had once prophesied, "selfish, jealous, and covetous, after her kind." She had been suddenly plunged into the responsibilities of new relationships. She was not gently or lovingly initiated into them. She was not called to fulfil active duties, but to take up passively the heavy burden of life. Her service was onerous, her position distasteful to her. There was no well-spring of lovingness left within her heart, her affection for Felix Guiscard had exhausted it. Earth no longer seemed to her like the great moving ocean, which must be governed by some law harmonious and good, though yet unknown to her; but cold, hard, dry, a round of petty grovelling cares, endurances, and duties, to which she had no clue.

She, the spoiled child of Dr. Glascock, whose very caprices were looked on as endearing, whose wilfulness was tolerated, whose love made many happy, had now no kind word said of her, save by one who had no influence in the contracted circle to which her existence was confined. It was her step-father, Captain Talbot, who remarked sometimes to his wife, when she was peevish with her eldest child: "Poor thing, there seems no harm in her, she looks to me very quiet and inoffensive; but I agree with you, I wish she were well married with all my heart, my dear."

CHAPTER II.

She will weep her woman's tears,
She will pray her woman's prayers,
But her heart is young in pain,
And her hopes will spring again
By the suntime of her years.

E. BARRETT BROWNING.

THE society of the country-town in which Amabel found herself, was no less distasteful to her than the interior of her home. But had she been older in years, or in experience, and personally independent of that society and its influences, it might have afforded her amusement to watch the oddness of the elements of which it was composed.

A country-town, even twenty years ago, before the age of railroads, was a rich museum of human curiosities. The young student-artist of character could have found no better model-room. But Bella only reflected that these were the people amongst whom her life was to be passed; she had nothing in common with them, not an idea, an interest, or aim. It was a forced alliance upon her part; had they appeared in any way dependent upon her exertions for their self-esteem or their amusement, her better feelings would have prompted her to meet the obligation; as it was, she thought it not worth while to find pleasure or improvement in her intercourse with them.

There was old Miss Maddox, driven sometimes into their society, when there were no card parties in more fashionable quarters, by mere stress of *ennui*; and big Mrs. Bathurst, whose husband died of care and curry, a colonel in the East Indies, who exacted a deference and attention on the ground of her father having been *an honorable*, which it was positive humiliation to their society to pay. She had a niece who lived with her, who wore long ropy ringlets, was kept in abject subjection by her aunt, and consoled herself for her home miseries by looking out for admiration amongst the officers in gar-

rison. No regimental gossip was unknown to this young lady, who called all the gentlemen by their surnames, and spoke familiarly of "the men," meaning the private soldiers. Nor did Bella see anything to interest her in the clergyman's wife, a country-bred young woman, with lots of children and of parish business always accumulating on hand.

The Talbots had withdrawn in a great measure from society; for in England one must regulate the circle in which one moves, by one's pecuniary ability to cope with those composing it, and these persons, who for purposes of their own found their way into St. Clement's, were nearly all with whom they visited, save that Captain Talbot had a professional acquaintance with Admiral Sir Jeremiah Thompson, a triton amongst the minnows of their little society, who invited them to a state dinner once a year, to feed them off of plate, and would have considered himself ineffably insulted by being asked to eat off of stoneware in return. Bella only perceived that the *idée fixe* of all the persons that she met was a holy hatred of the French, and that a man was held an infidel except he acknowledged a belief in every malicious calumny then in circulation against the "Corsican monster." Conversation amongst them never grew exciting, save when they compared their interpretations of the prophecies against him as the Beast of the Revelation, or Daniel's little horn. Dr. Glascock had early prejudiced her mind against the English, and she could not see the intrinsic excellences of character, national and individual, that lay beneath the surface both of society and manners. The exterior disgusted her, and, poor thing, she was too unhappy to look deeper. No mere stranger and sojourner can understand England or like its people. He must live amongst them, associate himself with their interests, work with them, feel with them, hope with them, in short, *grow English*, before he will have the least idea of their real excellences. The things a foreigner most generally admires in a six weeks' stay in London in the season, are precisely the "evidence of things unseen," of which the true Englishman is the least proud.

As spring advanced, there began to be talk amongst the gay people of the town about the Easter Ball. Peace had been

proclaimed. London was getting ready for the visit of the allied sovereigns, money was plenty, all England was beside itself; brothers and *beaux* were expected home from foreign wars, or naval stations; and, Mrs. Beamish, who had always young persons to recommend to places, county poets with books to be got out, and loads of lotteries and raffles, exerted herself on behalf of the society for the relief of seamen's widows, to get up a subscription ball. Lady Karnac, who could ill afford it, was pressed into taking four tickets, at a guinea each—the Captain, herself, Amabel, and Olivia were to go.

The white dress of Amabel was prepared. Weary of work and sick at heart, for the morning had been one of continued fretfulness and dissension, she offered, about four o'clock, to take the children for a walk along the London road.

It was a dreary expedition. She set out, thinking with what expectations of delight she had looked forward two years before to her first ball at Malta. “*Then* there were so many to be proud of me and love me.” That thought crowned every bitterness, and in spite of all her efforts her tears flowed silently, starting fresh thoughts of Felix and of Malta. She was very unhappy. Peace was proclaimed; a year and a half since they last met had passed, and yet no news of him had reached her.

“Stand back, children, and see the coach come over the bridge,” she cried, drawing them aside, as the sound of the guard's horn reached her. Over it came, with its four shining brown horses, thin but sinewy, scenting their stable from afar, and putting new life and energy into their exertions. It passed. A gentleman on the box seat looked back. A few yards further it pulled up abruptly. The gentleman got down, tossed his half-crown to the coachman, and joined them. It was Captain Warner.

How full of warmth was his first greeting! How cordially he shook her by the hand! How readily he praised the children! How he answered all her hurried, eager questions about Malta; not that he had been there lately, for he had been cruising with the Gibraltar squadron; but he could talk of old times, and of old scenes, and call back pleasant reminiscences.

By the time he left her at her own door, she had learned that his ship having been paid off, he had gained his post rank, had come down on a visit to the admiral, and would meet her at the ball.

With very different feelings from those with which she had looked forward to that evening, did she now put on her plain white dress, and wistfully gaze into her little looking-glass, marking the changes Time had made in her young features, and regretting the loss of the fresh bright complexion that had paled since she left Malta.

What a new feeling of pride and of protection it gave her to find him waiting for her at the door of the cloak room ! She felt that she was not so very isolated, when she introduced him as her friend to her mother and Captain Talbot ; and when she entered the ball-room leaning on his arm, and he had got a smart young ensign to be the partner of Olivia, she felt her consequence increased by his attentions, and knew they would ameliorate her position at home. Captain Warner was, as sailors mostly are, a spirited Terpsichorian ; and this evening, being in a state of high excitement, he outdid himself in his exertions.

“ Make way, there, for the gallant captain,” many cried, as he came down the middle, ably seconded by his now blooming, smiling, animated partner.

“ We’ll show you how to do it,” he exclaimed. “ Miss Karnac and I will show you how they do these things in style in Malta.”

It was the first time her residence abroad had been mentioned in England to her honor.

After the dance, he led her up the room to introduce her in form to Lady Thompson. The Captain, though destitute of worldly tact, had insured her kind reception by telling her ladyship at dinner that he was going to dance the first dance with a pretty girl with a large fortune. She held Amabel affectionately by the hand, and hoped she should have the pleasure of seeing her young friend at a dinner party next week, with her father and mother.

The captain was too ingenuous to keep his knowledge of his

pretty partner's money to himself, and soon the room was talking of "that lovely girl and her large fortune." Partners, the *élite* of the garrison and of the townsmen, contended for the honor of dancing with her, but in the midst of her triumph her constant thought was, "how stupid they all are compared to Captain Warner." At the end of every dance he contrived to find himself beside her. When tea-tables were introduced into the ball-room, he waited upon her, he cloaked her carefully in the passage when Lady Karnac insisted on going home, and she got into the carriage with a confused remembrance of pleasant things said, felt, and suggested, and with a crowd of questions on her mind that she had meant to ask him.

By the time, however, she was awake, and had breakfasted, Captain Warner came to call, full of hopes that she had spent a pleasant evening, and was none the worse for her exertions, and with proposals for a morning walk, which he was certain would do her good.

To be sure they were hampered with Olivia and the children, but the Captain would break off in the midst of his pleasant chat with Amabel, to run after "the young rascals," and set them to play with one another.

Olivia remained gloomy and silent; but to the rest of the party, the walk, which led them along the river's bank, was most delightful. "So different," thought Amabel, "to our daily dreary promenades up and down the rope walk," where the children were sent out to take exercise during the winter.

The admiral's dinner, too, was most agreeable. Lady Karnac and Captain Talbot met quite a different set from the people they had been invited with before. Captain Warner sat next at table to Amabel, and old Lady Thompson in the drawing-room ventured some solemn jokes with her about his admiration.

He expressed a wish that she should sing when the gentlemen came in from table, and instantly the old Admiral and his lady seconded the proposal. She sang some Breton songs, and her piano was surrounded by gentlemen applauding the performance, and talking with her of things abroad. Captain

Warner said something in reference to them about "puppies," but even he was pleased that she should be an object of admiration. He got her away into a corner soon, however, under pretence of examining some Chinese curiosities, and talked to her about his place—the Cedars.

Days rapidly rolled on; walk succeeded walk, and there were several more parties. Amabel cared not to examine the state of her own heart. She only knew she was immeasurably happier since Captain Warner's arrival; that his attention was something she possessed all to herself, independently of Olivia; that the niece of Mrs. Bathurst was "dying in love" with him; and she could not help regretting that the time was drawing near for his departure.

CHAPTER III.

"Why art thou weeping?" maiden mild,
 Said a Friar Grey to a lonely child;
 "I weep for the swallows gone over the sea,
 Who used to come and be fed by me."
 "Then dry your tears," said the Friar Grey,
 "They will all come back in the month of May."
 * * * * *
 "Oh! tell me, Friar," the maiden cried,
 "Why my sister weeps since her lover died,
 Will he come back with the early spring
 To woo his bride with a gay gold ring?"
 "Hush, hush, my child, he is gone for aye;"
 "Will my sister's life have another May?"

PAWSEY'S POCKET-BOOK FOR 1847.

WE have hurried over that part of our heroine's history when all in her that was most good and lovable was growing stagnant, for want of a free course amongst the barriers that repressed it. But all is changing now, or on the eve of changing. Captain Warner has called forth pleasurable feelings and awakened strong emotions. She cannot go back to the state of apathetic indifference from which she has been roused.

His departure from Admiral Thompson's was fixed for the

day after a great fancy fair which was to be held in the Park of Sir Julius Matthieson, the member for the county. All the neighborhood was there; all the *county people*—persons of landed property, who would have scorned any association with the townspeople, and even whilst they admitted them as buyers to the *fête*, kept themselves aloof from them.

This local aristocracy was, however, on good terms with Captain Warner, himself the heir expectant of a large estate in the next shire. He had cordial, pleasant manners, which, in addition to his property (his card of admission into that circle), enhanced his value there, and made him welcome. He held a private license as a single man,—a travelled man, and (not being of that county) in some sort as a foreigner, under which he might do anything he pleased; and shake off, on occasion, the shackles of conventional *etiquette*, which pinioned nature in that treadmill circle.

He very soon detached Bella from Lady Thompson, and went with her amongst the booths, paying, whilst she looked at the pretty trifles, a sailor's ready compliments to the pleased but aristocratic ladies who presided at each table. He was not a person who required any great amount of conversational power on another's part to "set him going." If he was in good spirits, and he found his earliest sallies well received, a woman of any disposition or capacity would have been sure to find him pleasant and agreeable.

He had a great acquaintance amongst the dowagers, most of whom had not seen him since he became a widower, and were glad to welcome back his attentions and his rattle. To many of these great ladies he introduced our Amabel; amongst the rest, he made her known to Lady Matthieson, the mistress of the mansion, who invited them to go into the house to a collation.

Captain Warner had one *idée fixe* with regard to social customs—that an old lady should always give place to a young one, a plain to a pretty woman. He carried his companion up to the end of the room, amongst the highest of the company, and though the seats of honor were already filled, procured her a charming place at a little side-table just fitted for two persons,

in the bend of the window; saw that she was helped the first to everything; pledged her in the first opened bottle of champagne, and, strange to say, gave no offence to any of the company, for the news had run amongst the guests that she was a foreign heiress, the elected Mrs. Warner. "Under the costliest embroidered waistcoat beats a heart," says a quaint modern philosopher; and people, however stiff, etiquettish, and unnatural, have always sympathy with the progress of a love affair. Captain Warner, but just returned from foreign service, had slighted none of them in his selection.

The pensive, subdued manners of his bride elect, together with her pretensions to birth, were in her favor.

"Come," said the captain, rising from his seat before the toasts were given, and offering her his arm. She rose, and they stepped out of the long, open window upon the mossy lawn. The kindly wishes of many of the guests went with the lovers.

He took her through the shrubberies, away from the crowd and bustle of the park, across a little bridge, into a hayfield. The laborers had left their work half done; their hay-cocks were still standing. Captain Warner selected one under the shade of a fine elm, on the slope of a hill near the Park paling, and made a fragrant couch in the sweet new hay for his companion. She sat down smiling, closed her eyes, and leaned back, giving herself up to the sweet and peaceful influences around her. The sun peeped through the nodding leaves upon the trembling branches, and seemed to press his warm, soft kiss upon her eyelids, whilst he called up a brilliant blush on her pale cheek, and caused her to shelter her sweet face from his glances with her hands. Captain Warner threw himself beside her, and, lost in thought, began tossing about handfuls of the delicious hay.

Amabel had held a loving intimacy with nature in her happier days. Nearly a year had passed since she had wandered far from the dull and dirty precincts of that country town. The peaceful scene around her, the quiet, the seclusion, brought back the saddening memories of the past; and, bending her head down in the hay, she found relief in quiet weeping. A barrier of hay hid her face from Captain Warner, who, busied

with his own hesitations on the eve of an enterprise important to his happiness, did not perceive her tears.

"This is the sort of day which ought to make a man happy," he began at length, drawing a little nearer.

A sigh escaped her, and was echoed by the captain, as though his feelings were not quite in unison with his words.

"Beautiful!" she said, drying her eyes, and gazing upward at the summer sky through the trembling branches of the elm that threw its shadows over them.

"I wish it might make me happy," rejoined Captain Warner. He put aside the screen of hay that was between them and stretched his arm out till it was almost around her.

An instinct prompted Amabel to change the theme. "All this is very different," she said, "from the rocky aridity of the greater part of Malta; but not unlike our own sweet vale at Ramalah. That lovely valley is constantly before me, even in my dreams."

"England bears away the bell, however, in home scenery," replied the Captain. "I have it much at heart, that you should grow familiar with our country life in England."

"I could grow warmly attached, I do not doubt, to any scene so beautiful as this. But I have never till to-day been beyond the dirty suburbs of the town, since my arrival."

"My place, 'The Cedars,' is considered very beautiful," continued Captain Warner. "I wanted you to have seen it, Miss Karnac, before addressing you. You would be happy there. I would shield you from everything painful or unpleasant. I would love you—I mean rather, I do love you as truly as any woman can desire to be loved. The Cedars only wants a pretty mistress. I have a sailor's heart, Miss Belle; forgive a sailor's blunt proposal. Your college men might have carved out their periods with more eloquence, but by no one could you be more passionately beloved."

Bella had started up. The Captain threw himself forward, but at the sight of her face he too sprang to his feet. Her lips were parted, expressionless, and that very absence of all expression sent a thrill of horror to his soul. Her face was pale; her eyes, red with her previous weeping, wandered wildly

round the field, as if in search of friendly aid. Suddenly they rested on the ivied village church, which stood at the bottom of the field, parted from it only by the grave-ground. With a cry she started forward, running swiftly towards it. In vain Captain Warner followed her, imploring her to compose herself, to go back to the house with him, for he would not distress her—did not mean to say another word. She heard not, or she did not heed him. Her light steps were as quick as his, and she gained the churchyard in advance of him. The church door happened to stand open. It was Friday, cleaning day; she flew in, and sank down, clinging to the rails of the altar. Lonely and unhappy one! it was as if failing all human sympathy, all human friends, she had flown for refuge to her Father in Heaven. She was cruelly ignorant, as we have said before, of even the first principles of religion; but there is something in every human heart which vice has not perverted, prompting it, in the extremity of sorrow or excitement, to turn aside and recognise its God.

Captain Warner followed her, and stooping over her, attempted to unclasp the fingers she had wound convulsively around the oaken railing; her head was leaning on the velvet-covered balustrade, and she was weeping bitterly.

"Dearest—my dear girl—get up, I entreat you. Get up. Come away," he repeated again and again, imploringly.

"No—no. Go away! Leave me! Take pity on me!" broke from her, as she caught breath between her intervals of sobbing.

"I dare not leave you here; but I promise not to speak to you. Get up. Take my arm, my dear Miss Belle. Come with me," repeated Captain Warner.

"No—no. Leave me," continued Bella.

The Captain, totally at a loss, like any other man in such a case, bethought him of a glass of water, and went to the church door to look for some neighboring cottage. By the time he returned with some water in a tea-cup, Bella was standing up before the altar, and was more composed. She had prayed as she knelt, for strength, and for decision, and with the prayer returned her self-possession.

She drank some of the water, and wetting her handkerchief with it, cooled her eyes and forehead.

"Shall we go now?" said the Captain, offering her his arm.

"No," she replied, "not yet. I have much that I must say to you."

"Not now; when you are better."

"Yes, *now*," she said, with energetic determination. "Captain Warner, you have been very—very good to me. What must my conduct seem to you?"

He tried to soothe her. She went on.

"You know that I *once* loved—loved as not every nature *can* love. See! I am not ashamed to own it. And with my hope there fled at once my early peace of mind, my early bloom of youth, my early capabilities of happiness. Till lately I should certainly have told you, that all power to love again was for ever dead within me. Nor do I love again! I *do not* love you, Captain Warner. Not as I could once have loved. Not as you yourself would wish to have me love. But something lately, since you have been so much with us, has whispered in my heart that I might love again—not passionately perhaps—but fondly, gratefully—one who would be willing to take me as I am—not to exact too much from me; who would cherish me, and bear with me, as a loving mother bears with a suffering child. I think I speak the truth in saying thus. I am so unhappy here."

"But this is all I ask of you, dear girl," said Captain Warner, trying to draw her nearer to his side. "I have no fear but that in a little time you will get over the past. Your sufferings at your age have been too much for you. I will cherish you. I will love you—my mother too. You shall begin life with us over again, at the Old Cedars."

"I cannot! I cannot!—I believe you and I trust you; but I cannot!" she cried, starting back with again that wandering look of pale, unmeaning horror. "If Felix were to come back, even years hence, could I love you? I vowed to love him all my life. I cannot break my vow. It is binding till his death! How then . . . Have pity on me! I fancy constantly I see him. When your image comes before me, *his* is

always there. Dead or living, it would give him pain were I ever to forget him. How can I marry *you*?"

"He is dead. Take my word for it, Miss Belle," cried Captain Warner, eagerly.

"Dead? Dead? How dead? When? Where? How long have you known it, Captain Warner?"

She stood up erect before him. Her face assumed another expression. Stern, earnest, fierce, and almost threatening; as though despite her eagerness, she warned him against being led astray by any unworthy rivalry, in what he answered her.

"If he were not dead," he said, in a lower tone, and as if subdued before her, "he must have broken his *parole* when he left Malta. Tell me, Miss Belle, in that case would you not think him too dishonorable to be beloved?"

"Annesley is now in Paris," he suddenly exclaimed, after waiting a moment, and receiving no answer. "If I write to-day to Annesley, and Annesley discovers that his name is entered on the Naval Obituary at the French Admiralty, will you believe me then? If he is dead, Miss Belle, will you consent to hear me? If he is not reported dead, then I, on my part, will cease, if you desire it, to importune you."

"Oh! let me know the truth. I pray you—I implore you, Captain Warner! I promise nothing, for I cannot promise, but pity me! Be generous, as I am sure you can be. Get certainty for me, at any rate. I should be happier with certainty, be it what it may."

He was about to speak, when suddenly the words were arrested on his lips by the swelling notes of the church organ, and sweet, warbling voices of the village children chanting their Sunday hymn.

Again Amabel knelt down on the stone flooring and hid her face before the altar, and Captain Warner stood beside her, watching the colored light which streamed upon her, and seemed to form a carpet for her kneeling on the pavement; for the sun was hastening westward, and his beams cast colored shadows through a few panes of stained glass spared in the upper division of the windows. It was a quiet village church, no longer greatly decorated, as it had been in times when faith impressed

its semblance upon material things, or rather, feeling borrowed a material expression. Its oaken carving, its stained glass, and monumental marbles, had been replaced, since the iconoclastic days of the Long Parliament, by whitewash, deal, and window-panes with bulls' eyes; but it was still, serene, neat, and devotional. On the spot where, for six hundred years, the weary and the suffering had knelt to pray and weep whilst in the body, and where each villager rested for the last time in his coffin, ere "dust to dust," he was gathered to his fathers, Captain Warner stood beside the woman that he loved, who was silently praying. The place was sad and calm, and, coupled with the influences of the music, brought, notwithstanding the exciting nature of their recent conversation, a sad and holy calmness into both their souls.

She rose up from her knees at length, and took his arm in silence. Nature without looked calm, and spoke the lesson, that, in the revolvings of time, however short, joy often follows on the track of sadness, encamping on the very spot where traces of a recent grief may still be seen. A merry party of young boys were shouting, struggling, and tossing about the sweet, new hay on the spot where they had sat, under the old elm tree; and Bella, as they paused, was pleased to see the place look glad again. They walked on through the shrubberies, and were met upon their way by Sir Jeremiah Thompson's servant, sent in search of them. They hurried on. Admiral Thompson's carriage was at the hall door, and Lady Thompson in it was waiting for her companion.

The captain put her in, and, as he closed the door, leaned forward and said, "God bless you! I shall not see you again till I have had an answer."

He pressed her hand. She bent forward for a moment as the carriage started, and a tear fell upon the hand he had laid upon its door.

What were her feelings? She herself would have been puzzled to define them. Deep gratitude for his preference and forbearance, a young heart's yearning for kindness and affection, a pity for him should his suit with her not prosper. Certainly all these feelings towards him argued the absence of indifference, but also, all united, they were not exactly love.

CHAPTER IV.

Grave will I be
 And thoughtful ; for already it is gone—
 God's blessing on my earlier years bestowed—
 The clear contentment of a heart at ease.
 All will I part with to partake thy cares
 Let but thy love my lesser joys outlast.

PHILIP VAN ARTEVELDE.

WITH her heart oppressed and her brow throbbing, and thoughts so crowding on her brain that they seemed too closely pressed together for any one to struggle itself into pre-eminence, she was set down at the garden gate of her dull home by Lady Thompson.

The immediate consequence of the *fête* was, that a number of smart carriages were seen inquiring their way, for several days afterwards, to St. Clement's; and that the people, who, out of compliment to Captain Warner, called on Lady Karnac and her daughter, went away with a very changed opinion of his taste, after having been admitted to a peep into the casket which contained his treasure.

The congratulations and politenesses thus showered on Lady Karnac brought about an explanation with her daughter. The moment her confidence was invited, Bella told her all; her early love, her early griefs, her present state of undecided misery. Oh! had some kind, sweet, sympathizing voice then "medicated" her wounded heart, "with goodly counsel!" Grief never can be spoken without a hope of help from those to whom it is told, which is the reason why, under the first pressure of a sorrow so great as to seem to us past remedy, only sanguine natures seek relief in confidence. But, when time has at least skinned the deep wound so that it will bear a tender handling, when one would think that the great bitterness of a distress was past, and that human sympathy and counsel were no longer very necessary, the perverse heart, prompted by a hope, however vague, of encouragement or aid from friendly counsel, is glad to pour its griefs into another's ear. And should this

dence be ill received—should the hope be disappointed—should the wound re-open—the last state of that poor heart is “worse than the first,” and we may almost despair of its ultimate recovery.

Mute with astonishment, bewildered by this sudden claim on her maternal sympathies for sorrows past instead of joys to come, Lady Karnac heard in silence Bella’s broken, eloquent, passionate narration. When it was done, and the weeping, shrinking girl looked up to her for answer, she said, coldly, “You may congratulate yourself that it has been so. I know too much of Frenchmen to have suffered my child to have sacrificed herself to one of them. Captain Warner, though perhaps a little old, is in every other respect a proper match for you. It is your duty not to forget, Bella, that the wild speculations you see every day before your eyes, are eating up our fortune, and that Captain Talbot may not be unwilling to give up the care of you.”

A flush had passed over the young girl’s face as Lady Karnac alluded to her first husband. It was with difficulty she could restrain herself, and remember it was her *mother* who thus spoke, though of her *father*; but, by the time her mother ceased to speak, her tears were dried, her lips compressed, her aspect still and calm. She thought no pang could be more bitter than to hear the expediency of her marriage with Captain Warner determined merely by reference to the convenience of the family; but she was undeceived when she found that the whole conversation had been repeated to Olivia, and that she had become the object of her vulgar curiosity, taunts, and observation.

In a few days, however, the house was closed to visitors. The youngest boy fell ill of some childish disorder, which threatened the most serious consequences to his weakly constitution. Then for the first time Amabel became of importance in the family; and as his patient, loving nurse, cherishing the flickering spark of baby life with alternations of joyful hope and agony, she forgot for a little while the cares and anxieties that were eating into her own heart; the fear of doing what she should repent, which had given her no rest; the memory of Felix and of

happiness struggling with her desire for peace and independence, and with the real regard and gratitude she felt for Captain Warner.

She had left the sick-room at mid-day, after a night of watching, and was lying on her bed; not resting, for nature was so much exhausted that the absence of activity and of excitement served only to make her feel the prostration of her strength. She was suddenly aroused by a sharp knock at her door, and the voice of Olivia, outside, calling her.

"Yes! What is it?" she cried, starting up upon the bed.

"Come down into the dining-room," said Olivia; "your lover wants you." It was a cruel phrase, for it called up thoughts of Felix; nay, perhaps even a half hope of his return, as starting up, she smoothed her hair, and went down into the dining-room.

Captain Warner heard her footsteps, and opened the door. She entered, closed it, put her hand in his, but did not raise her eyes.

"Have you heard?" at length she faltered.

"From Paris? Yes . . . And Annesley"

"And what?"

"What I told you is true. I knew it to be true. A fellow I once met in the Tuileries had told me. He is no more."

She did not stir or tremble, but the nails of her left hand which was closed, were pressed into the palm, and each drew blood. Her face was still and solemn; her eyes, wide open, were fixed upon his face with the old dreamy, distant-looking expression.

"Here is his letter," said Captain Warner, taking it from the fire-place and pressing it into her hand. "And now I'll say good-bye to-day, Miss Bella. I would not urge my love at such a time. Only take care of yourself, for God's sake; you look fatigued and ill.

"Take me, Captain Warner! Take me if you wish me for your wife. You see all—you know all. I do not deceive you. But oh! do not ask too much from me at first. Be patient, and be kind to me."

He clasped her in his arms—and, for a sailor's heart is soft,

and a sailor's feelings strong, tears stood in his eyes as he did so—tears for his own great happiness, tears for his rival's fate, and for her sufferings. She did not, could not weep, but laid her burning forehead on his shoulder.

When the Captain grew more rational, he placed her on a sofa. Her heavy head drooped on its pillow, and he sat down beside her, holding her feverish fingers, and talking eagerly of his long cherished love, his children, his mother, and the Cedars.

At last, after asking her some question, he paused, waiting for an answer. Bella roused herself a little, drew her hands from his, and passed them slowly over her forehead.

"I can hardly understand you, Captain Warner," she said. "I believe my head aches fearfully."

"God bless us! What shall I do for it?" cried the Captain. At this moment the dining-room door opened, and Captain Talbot put his head in, looking for his lady.

"Bear a hand, sir," cried Captain Warner. "Your step-daughter is ill. Call her mother and the servant to her."

They did not think that there was much the matter. But when they got her up stairs, and the strange excitement of the moment ebbed away, she found herself unable to go down again, and sent an excuse to Captain Warner. It was weeks before he saw her again, for she had taken the complaint of little Joseph; and several nights he passed during the height of the disorder, walking frantically up and down the Talbots' dingy dining-room, expecting every moment to hear tidings that she was no more.

Even after she recovered and could be brought down stairs, the vapors of delirium seemed floating in her mind. Since her engagement and her illness, every one was kind to her. Olivia was kept away. There was nothing now of which she could complain. But the remembrance of all that she had lived through never ceased; and every hour of suffering was multiplied by memory. A sort of phantom terror of her life crept over her; she could feel its approaches, but the pleasant voice of no kind friend drove it from her side. She had not strength herself to give it battle, and, indeed, every attempt at self-command seemed to prolong the evil. Vanquished, the

vain effort was but an added suffering to those which haunted her half-waking visions both by day and night.

So, when his bark rides safely in the haven, sheltered from the windy terrors of the deep that foams beyond, the sailor shudders as he tells of his past perils; so one who has been nearly drowned, and at the time felt little terror, lives over and over again in safety that awful moment, when, slowly sinking, he believed no earthly arm could save, and wakes himself in agonizing struggles with imaginary death upon his bed; so Bella suffered, living over and over every bitter mortification, every grief from sad remembrance that had been wrestled with and endured during the last two years. It was the rebellion of the vanquished, who, in rest, had gathered strength. It was not "the *mind* diseased," but the moral energies.

Yet in her darkest moments she could welcome Captain Warner; his presence was a reality before which the shadows fled away. She learned to know his step, to smile when she saw his pleasant face, to listen to and to enjoy his long sea-yarns, and share his interest in the Cedars. A new life was being grafted on the past.

He was so proud, too, when, as her careful nurse, he was allowed for the first time to drive her out in a low pony chair; and though his drives were somewhat protracted for an *invalid*, he brought her back more fresh from such excursions, till, when a little faint color dawned on her pale cheek, like the dying sunset tints on the peaks of a snow mountain, he triumphed in complete success, and was boisterously happy.

Mr. Sibbes had been written to at the time of her engagement, and an order upon his agents had arrived to pay her fortune. The Captain's affairs had long been set in order, and he hurried the lawyers impatiently in their preparations for the wedding.

It was agreed that they were not to live at the great mansion with old Mrs. Warner, but were to commence housekeeping at a pretty vine-clad cottage, within the Park bounds of the Cedars.

Bella wished to have been married in colors. "White," she said once, "was for the virgin-hearted." But Captain Warner

set his heart on having everything correctly bridal at his wedding. He insisted she should have a splendid *trousseau*, and advanced the money for it by anticipation from her fortune. Every day he brought her handsome presents. In vain she said, "Dear Leonard, I insist that you shall spend no more on me."

His marriage gift was a watch, hung on a slender chain of the most delicate Venetian workmanship. This watch he had been up to town to order. It was made as small as in those days was consistent with accuracy, and inside the case was an inscription, "Amabel Warner, from her husband, Leonard Warner," with the date of the day that was fixed on for their marriage. It was not a delicately sentimental gift, it must be owned, but the inscription gave an amazing delight to Captain Warner. When he presented it, with the case open, to Amabel, she blushed, hesitated, looked up one moment in his face, then pressed a kiss on the new name he had prematurely given her.

All tokens of affection were precious to her heart, and she was still so young and child-like, that pretty things, for their own sake, had a value.

'Tis pleasant to be rich in handsome jewellery—'tis pleasant to have beautiful new dresses the wonder of the town; and in the bustle of preparation, Bella found an interest which contributed a great deal to restore her mind and moral energies to their healthful tone.

Her wedding dress was of rich lace over white satin, a present from Captain Warner. In this she went one morning to the dingy church of the parish of St. Clement's. The sun, struggling through its crimson curtains, marooned with dust and age, looked down upon a splendid *cortège* of Captain Warner's acquaintances.

Firmly the bridegroom pronounced the solemn vows, and firmly they were echoed by his pallid bride; though once, as the ring was being passed upon her finger, she started and withdrew her hand, with that old look of agony or terror. It seemed to her that Felix, a pale phantom, passing between her bridegroom and herself, was kneeling at her side. It was but for

a moment. She looked up, saw the fatherly old clergyman, with his mumbling grey-headed old clerk responding from a big book at his side. She knelt down quietly; the ceremony went on uninterruptedly, and in a few minutes she arose, was folded in her husband's arms (he was no respecter of times, of places, or of persons), and received the congratulations of the company as Mrs. Leonard Warner.

CHAPTER V.

"Ma tu, fuoco d'Amor, lume del cielo,
Questa virtù che nude e fredda giace
Levala su vestita del tuo velo."—

DANTE-SONETTO.

'But O, thou light of heaven, fire of Love,
Revive that virtuous spirit, which now cold
And naked lies, and clothe it with thy veil."—

LYELL'S DANTE.

THE wedding feast was over; the wedding guests assembled in the hall and at the windows, watched the *adieux* of the family and the bride. She had changed her lace, orange wreath, and white satin, for a fawn-colored silk pelisse, white bonnet, and veil. Her own handsome chariot, with its imperials packed, stood with its four horses and a crowd about it waiting at the door. The post-boys of the "White Horse," both in new jackets, with wedding favors the circumference of cheese-plates, were flourishing their whips and turning round in their saddles to catch a peep sideways at the young and pretty bride.

The breakfast, served by the first confectioner of the town, and provided by Captain Warner, had been (contrary to the rule of wedding feasts) a lively one. The cake was cut with all honors. The Captain, brimming over with gay spirits, had been almost boisterously mirthful, and communicated an electric spark of merriment, by every burst of gaiety, to the table. He had

replied with great spirit to the toasts drunk on behalf of himself and lady, and now he was hurrying her farewells to her family, impatient to have her to himself, to call her wholly and for ever his own.

Oh ! parting moments ! how dear grow the indifferent when we are about to say *adieu*.

Bella clung to her mother's neck, and over and over again embraced the younger members of the family. Even her parting with her bridesmaid, Olivia, was affectionate, and coupled with a promise of invitation to the Cedars. And she stepped back when her foot was on the carriage step to give a last kiss to her kind stepfather.

The moment the carriage started Captain Warner pulled down all the blinds, and, with his arm around his wife, pressed her to his heart. Bella's head was bowed upon his shoulder in an attitude of humiliation. She seemed to ask his pardon that no better return than a divided heart could be offered upon her part for so much care, and tenderness, and love.

This little ceremony over, the Captain pulled up all the blinds again. He was very happy, he said, and if the country folk found pleasure in contemplating happiness, he, for his part, had no wish to be exclusive.

The day was fine ; a clear, bright autumn day, with a sharp little breeze, making the leaves fall. The country, too, if not exactly picturesque, was eminently English, and highly cultivated. Bella listened with pleasure to her husband's remarks, to the stories he told her of the country gentlemen whose houses they passed upon the way ; and rather enjoyed his little attempts at the inn, where they changed horses, to make his wedding day a memorable one, and to cause other people to be partakers of his joy. He paid the post-boys treble their legitimate gratuity. He sent into the inn parlor to have ten shillings changed into sixpences, and scattered them amongst the people round the door.

"The bachelors," he said, "to drink to Hymen, and the married men to buy some treat for the little ones at home."

In pursuance with which instruction, the good health and

prosperity of Squire and Mrs. Hymen were toasted at the tavern tap that night, with three times three.

The evening was closing in, as they drew near their destination. During the last mile or two, the captain's rattle slackened; he grew fidgety, and was continually letting down the front glasses and stretching his head out of the window.

"We stayed to breakfast, my love," he said, on one of these occasions, "because I thought we should be late for dinner; and I would not put my mother or Mrs. Buck out of their way on this first day of our arrival."

"Who is Mrs. Buck?" the bride asked.

"Our housekeeper, my mother's factotum, the ruler of the roast, the commanding officer of the servants' hall and of the village. You must keep on good terms with her, my little wife; and, indeed, she cannot fail to be bewitched with you. She is a good creature. I have always found her civil; but she is difficult to get on with; all good servants are."

A little half mile further, and the horses' feet were rattling on a bridge.

"D—— it!" said the captain, starting up and thrusting half his body out of the window. "Where are the tenantry? This is the boundary of the parish—yonder is the spire—and we ought to hear the bells."

The carriage stopped to pay the toll; the captain beckoned the pike-man to come up to him.

"Master Glass," said he, "where are my people, and have you heard the bells ring? I sent a man and horse on from the last post-house, to warn them to be on the look-out. Have you seen none of them cruising about here?"

"May be, captain," was the answer; "but I haven't heerd of any."

What naughty thing the captain said between his teeth as the chariot rolled on, need not be here repeated; and, irritated as he was to find, in his own village, so little account made of his new happiness, he found ample occupation, as the carriage turned off the great London road, in pointing out to Bella the village and its beauties. Yonder was the church, too handsome for the country—almost, indeed, a small cathedral. Near

it, close nestling under its grey eaves, was the neat vicarage, around which lay the village.

This was to the left, as they looked over the valley, with its winding glistening river, its sunny meadow-lands, and mills and bridges. On their right hand rose a hill, around the waist of which the road was cut that they were travelling. A bend in it carried them round the hill side, with their backs to the village.

Yonder is the house! Yonder their own cottage. There, to the right of the house, is one of its tall cedar trees. So little were they expected that there was no one at the entrance gate to throw it open, and one of the post-boys had to dismount.

On, through the wooded avenue; through other gates, they had to open; for even the gardeners had left their work, and all was calm and still. The captain sprang out of the carriage, and, running on beside it as it drove slowly, opened the gates through which it had to pass. And so they reached the house, swept round its broad frontage, and drew up in the flower-garden at its hall door. The captain furiously rang the bell. A servant promptly answered it. The gleam of shining lamps fell pleasantly from within upon the carriage.

"What can be the reason no one came to meet us? What is the meaning of all this, sir," cried the captain, "upon my wedding day?"

"I don't know, sir. I didn't have no orders," answered the footman.

The captain dared not vent his wrath where it was due. So he opened the carriage door and said, "We get out here, Belle," rather roughly. As he hurried her across the square, oak-pannelled hall, ornamented with armory and antlers, he said to her,

"Be particular to please my mother."

And the footman, opening the door of the drawing-room, she found herself in a pleasant, large, and brilliantly-lighted apartment, and in the presence of an elderly lady, who walked half way across the room to meet them as they entered.

"Mother, my little wife," said the captain. "She will be to you a daughter."

"You are welcome, Mrs. Leonard, if you come here with a determination to bring a blessing with you to your husband's home. But I am sure our English life will prove too dull for you," was the answer, as she touched her daughter-in-law's pale cheek with her lips, and coldly took her hand.

"It is dull," said the tactless captain. "Bella must make it gay to suit herself, and make the best of us. Is she not beautiful?" he whispered to his mother.

The old lady did not seem inclined to accord any further welcome to her daughter-in-law. Poor Bella turned aside in her embarrassment, and, being cold after her long journey, put up her little feet to warm them at the fire.

Old Mrs. Warner was of middle height, with a light wig arranged about her face in tiny curls. Her dress was black, and scrupulously stiff in all particulars; the materials were what ladies designate as "good;" the waist short, the skirt gored, with a few tiny gathers in front and the same to match behind; the bosom was low, square, and filled in with a white muslin kerchief, every plait of which was regularly folded. The most remarkable thing about her, however, was a bonnet, small (fashionable people wore them in that day of an enormous size), made of rich black silk, and lined with yellowish white satin, too thick to be used for anything but upholstery in our degenerate days. Some people surmised she slept in this; but certainly, from the time of her first rheumatic attack, six years before Bella knew her, to the last stage of her last illness, she was never seen without one.

The room was comfortably arranged, and even elegant; everything having its own place, everything having its own use, and everything handsome of its kind. Bella thought, with a shudder, how great must have been the contrast to her husband in his late frequent visits to her own ill-ordered, tawdry, miserable home.

"Mrs. Leonard finds our English climate chilly," observed Mrs. Warner, looking at her daughter-in-law as she stood over the fire.

"Bless me! Yes, she does, indeed," cried the captain, dragging, as he spoke, his mother's own arm-chair up to the fender,

and forcing his wife into it. "How cold her little feet are," he continued, feeling them; "and it is but a little time since she was very ill, mother."

"If Mrs. Leonard's health is so indifferent," observed Mrs. Warner, standing sternly and stiffly by the table, for she would have scorned to seat herself in any but her own particular arm-chair, "we cannot hope to keep you long in England; she will make that an excuse to quit the *dull* routine of English duties for a *gayer* life abroad."

"Leonard," whispered his young wife, stooping over him as he knelt, tenderly rubbing her chilled feet in his hands, "where are the children?"

"Bless me!" cried the Captain, starting up. "The children! Where are Katie and little Johnny? We have not yet seen them."

"They are in their nursery. I did not know you would think about the children," replied old Mrs. Warner.

"*Think about them*, Ma'am! I always think of them!" said her son. "I'll bring them down myself, and introduce them."

Saying which he left Amabel alone with her new parent. Had it been for a few months, instead of a few moments, the gentle manners and endearing disposition of the one, and the sterling qualities of the other, might have produced mutually a favorable impression. But this was not to be.

Of that which followed, Amabel, in her own narrative, speaks briefly; but how often I have heard the story told by others of its actors!

The Captain darted upstairs to the nursery, calling to the nurse, "Come, Mrs. Mathers, why have not you brought the children down to their mamma?"

"Mistress gave no orders," nurse began.

"Well! well! let them come down," said the vexed master, snatching up his little Johnny in his arms. "Come, children, come and kiss your new mamma, my loves."

"I won't come! I won't! And I won't kiss her!" shrieked the little fellow, struggling in his father's arms, and kicking furiously.

"Nonsense," said the Captain, with a shake. "Hold your

tongue, you little rascal. If it's you, Mrs. Mathers, that have been filling the child's head with such fancies"

"Not me, no more than others," said the nurse, sulkily, taking off the little Katie's pinafore. "You can't expect, sir, I'm to stop their ears when every one's been talking of the change for them."

"Silence, at once," cried Captain Warner.

At this moment, Johnny, kicking, struggled himself on to the floor. A particularly sharp kick, as he descended, stung the Captain's temper beyond control. Without a moment's thought, he gave a cuff or two (not hard) to the little boy, who, greatly terrified, but little hurt, set up a frightful howling.

It reached below stairs, to the drawing-room; it echoed in old Mrs. Warner's ears, who, with all speed, hastened to the scene of action. Bella, too, hearing her husband's voice pitched in an angry key, hesitated not to follow her.

"This is the first beginning of your new wife, then! These are her first doings! This is the treatment she is to bring on your poor children!" she heard the old lady say. "This is French influence amongst us! This is the woman you have brought home to replace the mother of your children, Leonard Warner!"

"Madam!" cried the Captain, stopped in a flood of the eloquence of passion that he was pouring forth upon the nurse and children, "I desire my wife may be received here as she deserves. My late wife was an admirable woman—far be it from me to speak in any but the highest terms of her conduct and her virtues; but she was not to be compared *in any way* with the present Mrs. Warner!"

"Go on! Go on!" cried the old lady. "All our old *English* rules of reverencing the dead and honoring our parents may be forgotten, now French influence is amongst us. But I wonder you are not ashamed to speak such language in the ears of your poor innocent children, of their dead mother!"

"Leonard! Leonard!" cried poor Amabel, pulling him by the sleeve; her face was as pale as ashes.

The Captain turned to her, still looking red and angry.

Bella caught up the screaming boy, and presented him to his father, to kiss, in token of reconciliation; but the little savage, whose hands were free, tore at her face, and brought blood, rending at the same time her rich lace veil to atoms.

"Do that again, if you dare, you little rascal," cried the angry father, turning round upon him. Old Mrs. Warner snatched the child; Bella threw herself between them, and weeping, praying, expostulating, dragged her husband from the chamber.

Once beyond the noise of the affray, he himself was glad to go. They got once more into their waiting chariot. The post-boys, who had lighted their lamps, rattled across the park to the cottage—their new home. And the household of new servants, assembled in the hall to greet their coming, were astonished when the carriage door was opened, to see a shamed and sulky bridegroom, supporting rather than assisting a pale and tearful bride.

CHAPTER VI.

Life is before ye—from the fated road
Ye cannot turn: then take ye up your load;
Not yours to tread or leave the unknown way,
Ye must go o'er it; meet ye what ye may.
Fail not for sorrow—falter not for sin,
But onward, upward, till the goal ye win.
God guard ye, and God guide you in your way,
Young pilgrim warriors who set forth to-day.

Mrs. F. KEMBLE

THE first thing after breakfast the next morning, the Captain went over to the Cedars, to make his peace with his mother. His wife had been agonized with the fear that the scene of the preceding evening would have led to a complete estrangement between the son and parent; but she was mistaken. She did not understand either her husband's character or old Mrs.

Warner's. Neither did she know how blood allies itself with blood, against the stranger.

The excitement of his burst of passion over, the Captain was willing to make peace at any sacrifice; and the terms exacted by old Mrs. Warner were severe. She had before tried vainly to persuade him to give up his children to her care; he answered, and truly, that such an arrangement would insinuate a want of confidence in his young bride. But now she again urged the proposal, and made the most of her advantage.

"You see that your new wife is not the proper person to intrust them with," she argued; without, as the reader will perceive, any ground of argument. "A mere young girl herself; just hatched, as it were, out of the nursery; brought up with French, and other foreign notions. I wonder you can think of giving your young children up to her. If you choose to risk your own happiness, I cannot see that gives you any right to sacrifice your children—at any rate till you have tried her."

Thus argued Mrs. Warner; and the Captain, no great analyser of thoughts or circumstances, feeling that his little wife had been somehow the cause of his humiliation, and so thoroughly ashamed of himself, that he was willing to purchase oblivion of his fault on any terms, yielded the point, and consented to the proposal.

Amabel, when he told her what he had done, dared not insist, or even express her mortification. She had learned to be afraid to irritate her husband, and did not say how much she had looked forward to offering him, as a compensation for her own imperfect love, a mother's watchful zeal for the welfare of his children.

So great was her disappointment, so great her earnest wish to win their love, that Mrs. Mathers, the nurse, soon complained to the old lady that she could not walk out, whichever way she went with her charges, without being troubled with the company of young Mrs. Warner.

This was not, however, immediately after her marriage, but only when her walks grew solitary, and the novelty of marriage was over; for, at first, Captain Warner was always at her side.

She had visits to pay to all the neighborhood; for the gentry around had called upon her, and, after partaking of wine and bride-cake at the cottage, went over to the great house to report their impressions to old Mrs. Warner; to gather up, in return, the inuendoes she threw out about "French influence," "infatuation," et cetera; and to draw conclusions against Amabel, from the fact of her not having her husband's children under her care.

Sometimes, however, the old lady would come over to the cottage and help her daughter-in-law to receive any smart people who she believed might call; on one of which occasions a lively girl being present, made some remarks about Lady Harriet Rustmere.

"You will like to go to Foxley," she said to Amabel. "The Rustmeres see a great deal of company from London, and have just come from abroad."

"I shall like very much to visit there," was poor Bella's answer.

No sooner had the young lady gone, however, than old Mrs. Warner turned with her severest aspect to her daughter-in-law.

"My ideas of English propriety, Mrs. Leonard," said she, "will not permit me to sanction the visits of my son's wife to Lady Harriet Rustmere. If you wish to associate with her and her *gay* circle, I must beg to inform you you must go there alone."

"Indeed, madam, I have no wish to know her. I did not know she was not a proper person," was her daughter-in-law's reply.

In every way, her ignorance of English modes of thinking and English modes of life brought mortification, beginning with her first great transgression and reproof by Mrs. Warner, when, on the Sunday after her marriage, she came into church at the second lesson.

"My love," her husband—who was very smartly dressed—had said to her, when she came down ready for church, "you should have put your other gown and bonnet on. My mother always goes in her best to church, and she is very particular on these occasions."

The dress was changed to please him. The fawn-colored pelisse and bridal bonnet were put on, but this took time. The eyes of all the congregation were upon her when she entered; and she sank in the opinion of the farmers' wives as half a Papist and a foreigner, when they observed that she required help to find the places in her Prayer-book; for the Talbot family were no church-goers, having no pew at St. Clement's, and one of the most wearisome and onerous of Amabel's new duties was to go to Morning Service and the lecture every Tuesday morning, in the cold church, with Mrs. Warner.

The old lady went, as did every other member of the congregation, for respectability's sake, or for example. It had never entered into her head to find comfort, or blessing, or "refreshing of the soul" in it—to make that hour of communal devotion the sabbath of the day, the sanctifier of the thoughts, the cares, and occupations of the twenty-four; nor did she dream of interesting in it the feelings of her new daughter. Enough that Amabel, well or ill, in all weathers *went*. She did not consider that the outward compliance, which is not even a symbol of the inward feelings or fixed principles of the soul, was nothing better than a semi-weekly solemn mockery.

But Bella's greatest trial was the housekeeping. For young beginners, old Mrs. Warner had considered it *en règle* to engage an inexperienced cook (for she herself was what is called a *manager*), under the idea that Mrs. Leonard *ought* to see to her own kitchen; for her practical philosophy was that of the Anti-Baconian schools, based on the presumed *ought to be* instead of *really was*. Captain Warner was particular about his table. Bella, who had not an idea of what was required of her, suffered him often to sit down to a bad dinner, without knowing, indeed, that it was a bad one. How was she to know when to give out white sugar and when to give out brown? When to stir up mince-meat and when to pickle cabbages? When John Hodges killed a pig, how was she to know what part she was to take after the first choice had been offered at the great house to Mrs. Warner? When Mrs. John Hodges sent round notice of a probable increase of family, how was she to know the customs of the place with regard to caudle? When the ringers,

and the singers, and the waits, and the grave-digger came round for Christmas-boxes, how could she equitably adjust their respective claims for half-a-crown or a shilling? How was she to know that egg-sauce went with poultry, and plum-sauce went with pig,—bread-sauce with game,—gooseberry-sauce with mackerel,—or the difference between goose and turkey stuffing?

"The whim we have of happiness," Mr. Carlyle says, "is somewhat thus. By certain valuations and averages of our own striking we come upon some sort of average terrestrial lot. This, we fancy, belongs to us by nature and of indefeasible right. It is simple payment of our wages, of our deserts; requires neither thanks nor complaints; only such *overplus* as there may be we count happiness, any *deficit* again is misery."

In like manner, some such balance the village population of England have contrived to strike with respect to the favors of the great, "which are of public right." They measure the gentility of their superiors by their observance of these proprieties, and to depart from them constitutes, in their eyes, the "no gentleman" or "no lady." The people round "The Cedars" were, one after the other, offended by little breaches of their customs; and, never disposed to see "a real, born lady" in a foreigner, began to call her a "poor thing," and to circulate stories of her ignorance about the village. Abundant evidence of her mismanagement stood on record on the books of her tradesmen, which old Mrs. Warner was always sure to see, and which gave rise continually to such remarks as, "Dear me, Mrs. Leonard, I find at Booth's you ordered twelve yards of house flannel. It is not the kind I buy. You won't find it wear at all, and it will be a sad waste to have a quantity of such stuff on your hands. I have ordered Booth to send up and take it back again." Or, "Mrs. Leonard, I hear you pay ninepence a pound for brown sugar, and I pay sevenpence half-penny. Young *English* housekeepers do not commit such extravagances; but it is different with foreigners, I dare say." Or, again, "Mrs. Leonard, Buck says you ordered your last yeast from Simpson's. With a stake in the county, you should really inquire into the characters of people. I never went there in my life. He's a *dissenter*!" And, though Captain Warner

bore all this kind of thing, at first, with great good humor, a growing sense of her deficiencies disposed him to listen to his mother's constant speeches about "English comfort," "English housekeeping," and "the domestic qualities of English wives."

"We must really change our cook," he said, one day after an unlucky dinner.

"It will be a shame to your wife if she does change," said Mrs. Warner. "She ought to learn her duties. A woman who cannot keep her husband's house, and is not fit to be intrusted with his children, and knows nothing of parish business, what good is she except to look at? A pretty face won't last a lifetime. Beauty is but skin-deep, son Leonard, after all."

Captain Warner having thus to keep his cook, hit on another plan. He met Mrs. Buck one day in the village, and having hinted to her in a way that he thought delicate, but which conveyed a great deal to Mrs. Buck's imagination, that his young wife was inexperienced, and wanted a wiser person to see about things, went on to ask her to give an eye to his household, and advise and instruct Mrs. Leonard occasionally. This was enough. From that moment Bella found that authority even over her own servants had slipped out of her hands. The butcher, instead of coming to her for orders, took them for both households at the Hall. Every potato cooked was counted by Mrs. Buck, Mrs. Mathers, and Mrs. Warner. Young Mrs. Leonard's "shiftlessness" and "want of management" formed the staple of conversation between the old lady and her satellites, and the essence of these discoveries was repeated daily, in some form or other, to Captain Warner.

Alas! Captain Warner was not the man to be proof against these insinuations. He had loved and admired his young wife when he first married her, with all the warmth and sincerity of his own hearty nature; but he was one of those men whose first passion of admiration is so unbounded, that they can see no flaw in its object; and so soon as a doubt of the absolute perfection of an idol works its way into the mind, it loosens their faith in every way, and leads them rapidly to the opposite and equally unreasonable extreme. He had little idea of the true trials of womanhood. He believed a pretty woman's

life to be always as Amabel's was when he first saw her, all play and sunshine; of its real weaknesses and temptations, the petty duties of life and the trials of the imagination, he had no idea, and for them would make no allowances. He could appreciate a woman *as a whole*, but had no power of appreciating her in detail. The first drops of distrust had oozed their way into the model of perfection he thought water-tight, and soon the enemies of his peace were "to enter, like a flood," through the leak which seemed so trifling.

* * * * *

Poor child! The only love she had amongst the strangers upon whom she was dependent for her happiness was her husband's, and that, as we have seen, with all its warmth and its effusion, was not appreciative.

"Loved would'st thou be? Then love by thee must first be given,
No purchase money else avails beneath the heaven."

And her heart was bankrupt! Neither did she know, as day by day she felt her hopes of happiness grow less, and with the diminution of her influence, her difficulties multiplying around her, that all might have been smoothed could she have truly loved. Nor was she in a state of mind to follow out the counsels of Archbishop Leighton—the Saint John amongst our churchmen—when he tells us that if there be anything wanting between the married in affection, "they should be earnest suitors for God's help in this, that His hand may set right what no other can; and that He who is love itself, may infuse that mutual love into their hearts, which they should have sought sooner."

She was not deficient in observation, not "set in her own ways" or opinions, there was no reason to believe that she would not surmount her inexperience and learn her wifely duties as other women learn; but from her first failure, others, whose fault it was, argued her incapacity, and, after a short struggle, she resigned all her authority into their hands. It was not, however, a passive or contented resignation, but accompanied with an impotent "kicking against the pricks," and a dissatisfaction with herself, which crowned her wretched-

ness. Disgusted with her mother-in-law's infirmity of meddling, she grew unwilling in anything to be her colleague. It was sufficient that the hand of old Mrs. Warner was put into any enterprise; there the hand of Amabel was sure never to come.

Poor child! we say again. She had not that love which imparts intuitively the knowledge of how all things may be made to work together for another's good; which accepts every assistance to promote the loved one's happiness; is anxious only for the end, and self-forgetting in its attainment. She felt that much was owing to her, as a woman and a wife; and vexed and worsted in her attempts to remedy the evils that beset her, she threw up her hopes of happiness in despair.

It was so hard to be unappreciated, to be considered incapable; to be looked down upon even by the village people, who—for the Captain had always been a favorite—ranged themselves, as they supposed, on his side, and began to pity him, and to make comparisons between his “poor thing of a wife,” and the dashing Miss O’Byrne, who rode so well, and who had always been looked on as the presumptive successor of the first Mrs. Warner. No one, of course, spoke openly against his young wife to the Captain, but the influence of public opinion reached him in looks, and signs, and general observations. He had been passionately enamored of his little bride, he loved her still; but did he honour and cherish her, when he admitted the thought that an English wife would have been better suited to his position—or regretted that he had ever seen her happy and childlike in her island home?

And so her days and her weeks passed, through that dull winter; she did not know how to supply herself with amusement or occupation. She was shut out from rumors of the great world, after long residence at a place like Valetta; and to procure new books from town, or magazines, anything in short but the Weekly County Paper, would have seemed to her as impracticable an enterprise as anything in tales of fairy land. Mrs. Warner recommended her (in English) Rollin’s Ancient History, a production, which, with its adaptation of the manners and sentiments of the Court of Louis XIV. to the history of the Egyptians, Greeks, and successors of Alex-

ander, she herself, in after years, said, always reminded her of a print that hung in the library of the Cedars, representing Garrick in the character of Romeo, descending from the window of his mistress, in ruffles, a flapped waistcoat, and a bagwig. She also read the Rambler and Spectator, and looked wistfully at the backs of the Sentimental Journey, Julia de Roubigné, Gil Blas, Percy's Reliques, Tom Jones, and other similar light reading, which she saw through the glass panels of a book-case, of which old Mrs. Warner had pocketed the key. And she took long walks in the park, which was damp under the trees in winter, or drove out with old Mrs. Warner, to make formal morning visits, stopping sometimes at poor cottages, where she learned to think charity an odious thing in England, on seeing the old lady call some poor woman up to the carriage door, and tender to her imperious advice, or reprove her, or inquire into all the secrets of her life and family, with a want of delicacy which seemed to argue that she thought the poor not gifted with the same nature as her own.

All this jarred harshly on the sensibilities of Amabel, for she did not know to what extent the old lady was looked up to, as the model of a gentlewoman, by her neighbors; or the confidence that the poor had, that their real wants would be relieved by her, according to a scale which squared with public opinion, of their deservings and necessities. Mrs. Warner thoroughly understood the character of the people, and if she considered it her privilege to be harsh in her reproofs, meddling in her inquiries, and exacting in her notions of worthiness, and of propriety, the village people considered it so likewise. Her system of personal supervision, and attendant charity, was well suited to the public opinion of which she was the centre, and the character of our institutions in that day.

Now things are changed, and changing. Every railroad, every fusion of parishes, every idea of the times which penetrates into the hearts of the people, serves to break up caste; and, with its attendant evils, has at least this advantage, that it must make all men, rich and poor, base their relations to each other less on relative position, than on the ground of a common humanity. It makes men remember that their fellow

men have hearts, and opens for their entrance to those hearts, many broad ways, never thought of in the days of Mrs. Warner.

CHAPTER VII.

*Of human faults poor woman has but two,
She nothing right can say—she nothing right can do.*

PROVERB.

“HERE is great news, by Jove, Belle! Old Towser, our Member, is just dead, and my friend O’Byrne will dispute the county.”

Thus cried the Captain, returning to the breakfast-room, whence he had been summoned one morning, early in February, to receive a verbal message, carried by a trusty horseman to all the influential supporters of the Blue interest in that part of the county. The prospect of an election, which so greatly animates “true Britons,” conveyed but very vague and feeble notions to Bella’s mind.

Not so to the mind of the elder Mrs. Warner. No sooner had her son, leaving his farm business (for like all Naval officers on half pay, who are possessed of a few acres, he was a great trier of what he called the experiments of common sense; wiser farmers called it sowing guineas), no sooner, we say, had he started for the county-town on horseback, than the old lady sent over the housekeeper, with a quantity of blue chintz under her arm.

“What is all that for, Mrs. Buck?” said Amabel, when entering the drawing-room, she deposited her burden on the floor.

“It is to cover up the yellow, ma’am,” Buck answered. “My mistress’s principles is Blue, and we never have so much as an orange in her house, at the time of the ’lection. And young master—the Captain, could not be bribed to eat an egg when he was a boy, bless him, during the polling time, ’cause of the yellar in the egg.”

By the close of the day all the county was alive and astir. Public houses were getting up their flags, busy fingers were manufacturing cockades; the addresses of the rival candidates, O'Byrne and Eccleston, were posted on every dead wall; canvassers were scouring the country; landlords were calculating the votes they could command, and the price that they should claim for the support they lent their party; and the few "independent electors" were lying in waiting, till the necessities of one or the other party should force them to buy up consciences at famine prices.

It was the second morning after the news came, and Amabel was sitting idle, alone, before her fire; for the rug-work she was engaged upon being grounded with buff, was, by Mrs. Warner's order, put aside, when the foot-boy announced two gentlemen. She rose, and at the same moment, two young men, very smart, in riding-dresses, with the self-satisfied look of those prepared for fascination, followed the servant into the room.

"The lady of Captain Warner, I presume," said the foremost, bowing most politely. "My name is Eccleston."

Amabel stood bowing, and motioned to the strangers to take chairs.

"Your husband I find, madam, is from home," pursued the stranger.

Amabel was sorry he had gone to C—— that morning upon business connected with the Blue Committee.

"At least," said Mr. Eccleston, "I may consider myself fortunate in being admitted to his lady, of whose attractions and accomplishments I have heard. You are the scion of a noble family in France, I am assured, madam."

Amabel bowed.

"France is a noble country," pursued Mr. Eccleston—"a country with which it is our interest to cultivate the closest ties. That last most bloody war was a mistake, as we conceive, upon the part of this country. It is our policy henceforward to preserve peace, to cultivate commercial and friendly relations, to wreath the olive branch with the laurels we have won."

"War is very terrible," said Amabel, interrupting the rough sketch of a speech he was composing for the hustings.

"The present ministers require to be closely watched by an active opposition of the disinterested of this country," added the friend of Mr. Eccleston, "or we may fear lest private views, the flatteries of royalty, or the national tendency of aristocratic principles should lead them so to pander to the lust of aggrandizement among the autocrats of Europe, as to overlook the weal of nations, and place the peace of Europe on an insecure foundation. There is another subject which, in this present Parliament, will engage the attention of our leaders, the disabilities pressing harshly on the consciences of our fellow-subjects—sufferers, for conscience sake, for their allegiance to an ancient church. I mean our Catholic fellow-subjects," looking at Mrs. Warner.

"The Catholics appear to me not to be liked in England," said Amabel.

"And you agree with *us*," said Mr. Eccleston, "that a man who serves his God conscientiously ought not to be held incapable of serving king and country. Your unbiassed judgment, your pure heart, ally you with a liberal policy, and make you feel, that either politically or religiously, it is an unworthy thing to coerce consciences. *You* would not compel, I feel convinced, the sacrifice of privilege to interest. *You* would not condemn the man who voted according to his conscience any more than one who worshipped according to his creed?"

"Oh! no," cried Amabel.

"Neither would your generous and noble-minded husband," pursued the Yellow candidate.

"No, I am sure not," said Bella, confidently.

"Ah!" exclaimed the candidate, rising, with his hat pressed to his heart: "And with such beauty—with the influence of such powers of mind—with every fascination, what may our side not dare to hope, when its principles are advocated by such a bride to such a husband! We take our leave, venturing to hope, at least, a generous opposition on the part of Captain Warner."

Amabel bowed, and rang the bell.

"What can they have come for?" she thought. "They have not solicited my husband's vote. They only 'venture to hope a generous opposition.'"

"And, madam," said Mr. Eccleston's companion, turning back as his principal went out of the door, "we may then venture ourselves to repose, and to assure others they may repose confidence in your assurance, that Captain Warner is too much a man of high principle and the perfect gentleman, to demand the regulation of the conscience as the price of those benefits which the vicinity has the right to look for at your hands?"

Amabel bowed again. The strangers bowed. The door closed between them. An hour after there was a run upon Booth's shop for yellow ribbon. The news spread that the Yellow candidate had been seen to ride smilingly through the park gates of the Cedars, and that he had secured the assurance that Captain Warner, though on the Blue committee, would not attempt to influence the votes of his tradespeople or tenant farmers. Never before, within the memory of man, had the Yellows been successful in the village; no man when he got up that morning prepared to second the Blue interest, would have believed the prophecy that in a few hours "Vote for Eccleston" would be scrawled on every wall and even along the park paling.

The news like wild-fire ran up to the Cedars. For a few moments old Mrs. Warner was electrified; and had she permitted herself to remain electrified very long, the Blues might have been worsted in the close-run election. In a quarter of an hour all the servants she could command were dispatched over the neighborhood with the intelligence, that conscience or no conscience, promise or no promise, if any vote were given to the principles of the French revolution and their representative, Mr. Eccleston, Captain Warner and herself would, for the future, give all their custom to the shops kept by Blue voters in the town of C——.

The excited Yellows paused, looked at each other, separated, and sneaked homeward, where their wives, whose eyes were on the home department, frantically demanded, "how ever they

could have been such woundy fools as to put a word of faith in Mrs. Leonard Warner?"

The Yellow ribbon was put aside or burnt. The ferment of the place subsided. Every one desired it should be forgotten he had promised to vote Yellow; and so anxious were the delinquents to remove suspicion, that the earliest votes on polling-day were those they gave to O'Byrne, to the exceeding discomposure and disappointment of his rival.

Poor little Bella! When her husband's horse's hoofs were heard in the avenue, she sprang forth to meet him, and, regardless of the presence of several persons who were with him, told him, clasping his horse's bridle, with a trembling voice and eyelids swelled with tears, that the village was all going to vote Yellow, and how it had occurred. She needed, in her agony of apprehension and of self-reproach, some kind and hearty voice to reassure her; and no one was capable of doing this more cordially by temperament than her husband. He was on the point of dismounting, and, forgetting the Blue interest, hasten kindly to assure her that things could not be so bad as she supposed, and that he did not attribute any fault to her, when the dashing Miss O'Byrne spoke to him.

"We had better ride down at once to the village, and protect Tom's interests from the French principles of Mrs. Leonard Warner."

"True—yes," he answered. And the party turned away at full speed, leaving Amabel uncomforted. Nor was she consoled when the captain, returning, told her there was not so much harm as they had feared. She cared no longer how the votes went—Blue or Yellow—she was thinking only of the dashing Miss O'Byrne, and the tone in which she ordered him.

The village people, after this event, were afraid of being supposed to be influenced by her; so that one woman sent up to the great house to know if Mrs. Warner would be pleased to wish her to accept some broken meat that had been sent her by Mrs. Leonard's order. And, as the captain scoured the country with the dashing Miss O'Byrne, her brother's most unscrupulous and successful canvasser, and had to listen everywhere to multiplied jokes and ironical congratulations on his

wife's talents for electioneering, judge if he did not sometimes think that a high-spirited Englishwoman, of the dashing school, who could aid his fortunes, take a five-barred gate, and be *au fait* in local customs, would have been more the wife for him than the woman he had chosen ?

And Amabel, mortified and miserable, when her busy husband set her aside as one incapable of entering into his employments, and preferred to refer all that interested him to Miss O'Byrne and other dashing women, judge if, amongst her many tears, none ever fell over the thought of that happy—happy future sketched for her by Felix ; a future, in which, not only as the wife but as the woman, she would have had her part of usefulness and action, and have been loved, and trusted, and admired by her husband, and, perhaps, a little admired by other people too.

There was another thought—a thought which made her weep, but which ought to fill the young wife's heart with bounding hope and joy. There were tidings that she had to give her husband, which would unite him to her, she was sure, by nature's holiest ties. But how whisper, with her arms thrown round his neck, the blessed name of *father* ? How speak of her new hopes to him and linger over them, anticipating their blessedness, when his whole time and thoughts were engrossed by the election ? For when he came home in the evening, wet, tired, and a little irritable, with his pockets full of lists of voters, and sat down, after a late and hurried dinner, in his dressing-gown and slippers, absorbed in calculations, to call off his attention, and to tell him then the new hopes he must share with her, would have been a profanation. And to have him, the next morning, after a hasty kiss, go off to forget all day, in the society of Miss O'Byrne, what she had told him, would have been bitter mortification.

"Bella," said the captain, coming home, as usual, cold, hungry, and tired, from the county-town one Saturday. "Bella, I have a note for you in my pocket, asking us to dine on Tuesday with the Rustmeres, to meet Lord Loudoun, Lady Harriet's uncle, who has come down from town, and Sir John Pawley. I saw Lady Harriet to-day at C——, and she hopes you will

excuse her not having called, as they have but just come down. Rustmere is on our committee, and this dinner is to be rather a political business, I suppose."

"I cannot go," said Bella.

"And why not?" said the captain.

"Why not—pray?" said Mrs. Warner, who happened to be there.

"I thought that Lady Harriet . . . that she was not . . . not quite a person whom I ought to see," she faltered with a blush.

"Stuff and nonsense!" said the captain. "She is a gay, dashing woman, nothing more. Who put that into your head?"

"When I told Mrs. Leonard that Lady Harriet was not a desirable acquaintance for so young a person, so ignorant of our customs, I meant to insinuate nothing, as Mrs. Leonard, from common report, must be perfectly aware, that would render her unvisitable. Her house is not a desirable school of life for a young woman; but, at the same time, women of consideration in the county go there. It may be of advantage to you to meet the Earl of Loudoun and Sir John Pawley; and, if Mrs. Leonard is squeamish only when her *husband's wishes* and the interests of the *Blue Party* are concerned, I can only attribute it to a want of knowledge of what are the duties of an English wife," said old Mrs. Warner.

The old lady stayed with them till late, irritating both wife and husband to the last degree by her ill-timed observations. Both went to bed in an ill humor. The next morning, albeit it was Sunday, the captain started off in a post-chaise to attend a meeting in a distant part of the county; he was only to be back in time to dress for dinner on the Tuesday. They had parted—not in anger—but unkindly, and Bella, in the hours that she spent alone, suffered at the recollection, and longed ardently for this her husband's longest absence to be over, that all might be made right between them.

Poor child!

She dressed herself betimes, for her visit to the Rustmeres, in the most becoming costume she could put on. Her husband's gifts of jewelry encircled her throat and arms, and each one had

been kissed as she put it on. Her light blue silk set off her clear complexion, and a cunningly devised *coiffure* of rich lace enhanced the symmetrical beauty of her head.

She wished to look lovely—she wished to remind her husband of her youth and of their marriage day; for as they drove to Foxley she meant to tell him all. During that winter ride, when she would have him to herself, she would gladden his true heart with her secret, and, in the effusion of that moment, she would entreat him, when the election should be over to take her, for at least a little time, away from the influence of his mother, and give her at length a fair chance of acquiring his esteem. As the tender field-flower cannot grow beneath the shade of the prond forest cedar, so she could never acquire consideration and confidence, and her husband's full affection, in the neighborhood of Mrs. Warner.

She was dressed; the carriage waited; old Mrs. Warner, who had come down to the cottage to see how she looked, was fidgety and fault-finding. Time was pressing; it was five o'clock, and half-past five was the appointed dinner hour. It was a ride of seven miles over cross-country roads, and no great speed could be got out of Mrs. Warner's fat carriage-horses. The captain had not come home.

Bella heard horsehoofs in the park, and started up. It was not her husband, but a messenger; Captain Warner sent a note. He was detained on business—could not tell when he might see her. She must go without him, and make his apologies.

"I dare not go alone. I shall send an excuse," said Bella, dropping the paper from her hands; but in a moment she repented her exclamation, for old Mrs. Warner followed it up with her usual speech about "English wives," and "the *Blue* interest," and "French principles," &c.

"Then I *must* go!" said poor Bella: and breaking brusquely from her mother-in-law, she sprang into her carriage, and gave the order to drive rapidly.

With her head pressed in her hands, and leaning against the side of the carriage, crushing the lace so coquettishly put on, she sobbed for the first four miles, as though her little heart would have discharged in tears its weight of sorrow; then, as

she remembered that she was about to make her entry alone in an assemblage of strangers she began to think of her appearance, and half forgot the causes of her grief, in the efforts she made to dissipate its traces. She fanned her swollen eyes; she opened the windows, that the fresh air might revive her; she renovated her pretty head-dress; and when the carriage turned into the grounds at Foxley, she sat up erect, drew her shawl around her, and strained her features into the social smile.

It was a quarter after six. Her heart fluttered as they flung open the hall door. Dinner was evidently going on, and she would have to meet the dreaded strangers in the dining-room.

Gathering her dress around her, she was about to alight, trembling with nervous apprehension, when a wild bark, furious but joyful, hailed her from the hall. A white dog, with long curling silky coat, and pointed ears, pushed past the Foxley footman, and sprang, leaping, barking, through the carriage door.

"Barba!" she cried. "Barba! Barba! My own Barba!" and pressed the little creature in her arms, and wept and kissed him, without regard to the opinions of the servants, who were witnessing the scene.

"Who brought this dog here?" was her first question.

"I believe he came with a French gentleman, my lady. Didn't he, Reynolds?" said the footman, looking round.

Then Felix was alive! Felix was there—and she about to meet him. *She*, the wife of Captain Warner. Her limbs trembled. For half a moment she felt it would be impossible for her to meet him; but she remembered what might be said against her, if she persisted in not entering; she thought of her husband's wish she should attend this gathering of *Blue* supporters; she dreaded old Mrs. Warner.

Resigning the dog, with a last kiss, to Reynolds, she passed her hands over her brow, and then pressed them to her heart. She felt she must retain, if possible, her presence of mind, or at least the full possession of her senses.

CHAPTER VIII.

Our course is onward, onward into light;
What though the darkness gathereth amain,
Yet to return or tarry, both are vain.
How tarry when around us is thick night?
Whither return? What flower yet ever might
In days of gloom, and cold, and stormy rain,
Inclose itself in its green bed again,
Hiding from wrath of tempest, out of sight?

Sonnet.—R. C. TRENCH.

THE door of the dining-room opened, and a tepid fume of dinner, and a buzz of many voices issued from it into the hall. The master of the feast came out, retaining his table-napkin in his hand. Amabel, trembling with excitement, and forgetful of the awe with which strangers had inspired her ever since she caught the tone of society in England, poured forth to him a torrent of excuses for her husband, and regrets for her late arrival.

“Never mind it, my dear madam,” said Mr. Rustmere, a young man, rather tall, of as much consequence, as a leading man of property in the county, as his wife was, as a leader in society. “Warner is such an active fellow, that his friends must be content to catch him when they can. He is doing Blue work in another part of the county. The Yellows, I hear, call him and O’Byrne’s sister—ha! ha! the *Blue devils*! She is a dashing person—a great flirt—and a prime favorite with your husband. We have old Sir John Pawley here for you; the chairman of the Blue Committee. I have kept a vacant place for you by him.”

Trembling—leaning on the arm of Mr. Rustmere, Bella made her entry into the assembly. Trembling, she dared not raise her eyes, lest encountering those of Felix, she should falter in the exchange of civilities with Lady Harriet Rustmere. Trembling, this introduction ended, she made the cir-

cuit of the table, and took her vacant place by the Blue Chairman.

The bringing back of cold soup, and one after another of the earlier dishes, for some time occupied her attention. Amongst the voices of the guests, she did not recognise the tones so well remembered, the tones that rang in her ears so often in her dreams. She did not dare look up, the eyes of the whole assembly, she fancied, would be on her; should she blush, God knows what reports might be made to Mrs. Warner.

A low whine caught her ear; the little dog, watching his opportunity, had made his way between the footman's legs, into the room, and now jumping upon her, testified its love and happiness, by every possible canine illustration.

"*Giù! Giù!* Barba! Down! down!" said Bella, trying to soothe her happy favorite to lie unnoticed under her chair.

"Take that dog off," said Mr. Rustmere.

"Come away, sir, come," said the servant, attempting to catch it.

"Colonel Guiscard," cried Mr. Rustmere, "call away your dog. He is troublesome to Mrs. Warner."

Colonel Guiscard rose.

It was not Felix; but a slightly older, and more military looking man, with reddish hair and beard, taller than Felix, with well marked, thin, and foreign features.

"Ha! ha! Colonel!" said their host, "we should have put you next to Mrs. Warner. Love me, love my dog. Ha! ha! Eh? Mrs. Warner?"

Deeper and deeper crimson flushed poor Bella, and, for the eyes of all were on her face, she turned aside to the old gentleman, her neighbor, and in a low, trembling voice, to change the conversation, asked him the first question that came into her head.

"In what month may we expect to hear the nightingales?"

"Eh?" said the old gentleman, seeing that she spoke, and turning towards her.

"When may we expect to hear the nightingales?" she repeated, in a louder key. The old gentleman bent down his ear, after looking at her vacantly.

Bella felt obliged to shout again.

"Eh? What did you say?" said the old gentleman, bending his ear closer.

By this time all other remarks were hushed, and every person at the table turned towards her.

"Nightingales! Nightingales, Sir John!" shouted Mr. Rustmere. "*Nightingales!* Mrs. Warner wants to know when you expect to hear the *nightingales?*"

A titter ran round the table.

"Eh? Ah! very pretty," said the old gentleman. "I expect to be in town."

Nothing could have persuaded Bella to make any further observation, or utter more than "Yes" and "No," whilst they remained at table.

Ah me! It took a weary time to eat that weary dinner; and the ladies sat long over their dessert, for they were all politicians, and the county election interested them as greatly as the gentlemen.

Even after they went into the drawing-room, the same conversation was renewed.

Lady Harriet Rustmere, of whom we have not yet spoken, was a coarse, bold woman, with plenty of tact, if not to please, at least to do what she pleased with other people, and abundance of *dash* and good-humor about her. No woman in the world better understood how to make the most of her position. Her house was always open, her table always handsome, her love of patronage extreme. She was one of those many women who, if they have never put themselves out of the pale of society by committing the unpardonable sin, it must be attributed to position rather than to temperament or to great virtue, and whom the world, swift to judge, pronounces unprincipled.

"I told the captain I wanted to introduce you to Lord Loudoun, old Pawley, and one or two other men," she said to Amabel, as soon as they were in the drawing-room, "or I dare say that old mother-in-law of yours would not have let you dine here. I baited the hook with my uncle, Lord Loudoun; for I knew that, to see a ministerial peer, she would let you go to the devil. I had to catch your husband, years ago, in the

same way. Though she does use her influence on our side, there never was a more bigoted old female, in many respects, than Mrs. Warner."

Bella looked up in amazement at the free-spoken Lady Harriet, who, as she said this, was standing warming her feet over the fire, with her face protected by a screen. Her gown was pulled up high above her ankles. She had large, broad feet, a coarse, stout, but not ill-shaped person, and large plump arms. She was dressed (I like to tell how people dressed; I am myself short-sighted, and have learned to judge the characters of people much less by their physiognomy than their clothes)—she was dressed in a black gauze, spangled with round gilt vignettes of three sizes. Her black, oily hair, which was covered by no cap, and grew far back upon her forehead, was put up in great puffs at the crown of her head, revealing strongly-marked and somewhat Jewish features.

"Well, my dear," she said, seeing Amabel did not answer; "you look *toute ebahie*. We shall know one another in time."

"I wanted to ask Sir John, only he is so deaf, and I could not make him hear across the table," said a stout, single lady in a cap, "what is the reason Huddisfield gives seven more Yellow votes than it ever did before? I dare say, Mrs. Warner, you can tell me. Your husband canvassed that part of the county."

No. Bella did not know. She had never heard of Huddisfield.

She sank at once in the estimation of these ladies, who could not comprehend such indifference. "Poor Warner! He had better have taken Bessy O'Byrne. One may go further and fare worse. He has found that out by this time," said one to another, in an audible whisper.

Having thus weighed in a balance the powers of the bride, and found her wanting, the ladies gathered round the fire and went on with what they had to say.

"Tell Lady Harriet," said one of them to the stout lady, Miss Armstrong, "how you paid yourself out of the pockets of the Yellows."

"Miss Armstrong took a Yellow bribe!" shouted Lady Harriet. "Hear! hear! hear! I will never believe that!"

"Yes! Yes! I plead guilty," said the accused, her eyes sparkling at the recollection, "and this is how it was. Bill Purchell (you know Bill Purchell, Lady Harriet?—my man at Lawton) has a little freehold, in addition to what he holds of mine, which brings him just within the qualification. A fellow came over to me late the other night to give me notice there was a Yellow agent down at Bill's, and he thought it very likely the old fellow would be bribed to rat over to the Yellows. Now, Bill, you must know, owes me a little matter of rent, which I have not been hard in pressing for, because I knew his wife had been ill and the lease was nearly out, and he did not make the farm answer. Well, I put on my garden bonnet and clogs, and was off two miles in the dark over to Lawton. I went up to his cottage—did not knock. I suppose Bill expected me about as much as the d——. I opened the kitchen-door and looked in. There was the agent, sure enough, with a pile of shining *Yellow Boys* spread out upon the table.

"'Hoity-toity!' said I, 'my masters. Why that is bribery and corruption. I've caught you with the wages of iniquity in your hands.' 'No, my lady,' says he, struck up all of a heap at sight of me; 'it is only a present from a brother of mine.' 'Is it?' says I. 'If so, then prove it. You promise O'Byrne a Blue vote, do you?' 'Yes, I do,' says he, pushing the gold across the table. 'Not so fast,' said I. 'If that money is a present, I ought to have a share. You remember the five quarters' rent you owe me?' He looked at the Yellow, and the Yellow looked yellow enough at him. 'Well,' said I, 'which is it? Do you prefer a prosecution for bribery and corruption?' 'No,' said he. And the end of it was, that I choused the other party out of both money and vote! Ha! ha! ha! That's what I call a *blue joke*!"

"Capital!" cried Lady Harriet. "Why did not that Yellow fool buy one of Purchell's winter cabbages, and pay a guinea for every grub he found on it? Who is to call that bribery? Nobody has a right to stop me if I choose to give £20 for a tom-cat or a cauliflower."

Amabel had heard enough. No one, it was evident, took thought of her. She stole away from the circle, and, passing through the division of the room, which, separated from the rest by scagliola pillars, contained the harp and piano, she went into the conservatory.

No lamps were there; but it was dimly lighted by the reflection from the dining-room, for a glass door, opening on a little ante-chamber, communicated by another glass door with that apartment. She could hear the buzz of conversation amongst the gentlemen, she could see them indistinctly drawn around the fire with their glasses, all save Col. Guiscard, who sat thoughtfully alone at the long table, with a bottle of claret untasted at his side. From several things that had reached her ear at dinner, she judged that he was staying with a French emigrant abbé, long resident at C——, and that the Rustmeres had met him during their tour abroad.

He was Ferdinand ——, Felix's elder brother. She could not be mistaken. She watched him; her eyes never turned from him; she was tracing the likeness. Felix's brother! Did he know her? Were his thoughts of her, as hers of him?

Undiscovered in her retreat by the servant with the coffee, she was yet found out by Barba. Alone with the little dog, the living memento of past days—of her young life's brief happiness, she gave full vent to her tenderness and to her emotion. Her large tears glittered in his curls, her arms were thrown around his neck, her fervent kisses were rained upon him.

It was, as she was thus engaged, that a little noise aroused her. The gentlemen had risen from table, and Col. Guiscard, having opened the dining-room door which led into the ante-room of the conservatory, was passing by the outer door into the garden.

Amabel rose, and pressing her burning forehead against the glass, looked after his tall figure as he moved, with rapid strides, into the darkness. The little dog sprang up, scratched against the door, and whined.

She did not wait to think, but winding her lace scarf about her head and neck, she opened the conservatory door, and fol-

lowed him into the garden. The lawn was white with snow, but the gravel paths were freshly swept. She followed the one which she had seen him take, which led her by an easy sweep around the shrubbery.

It was the last time in her life she was permitted to believe her least action of no consequence—the last time in her life she dared to follow, without after thought, the bent of her own impulses or fancies. She hastened on till, in a narrow path that crossed the lawn, she spied him walking rapidly towards the house, and then she slackened her pace. It struck her for the first time that he might think it strange she followed him. She drew back, therefore, into the shade, and left some distance between them, intending to slip after him, unobserved, through the door of the conservatory; but the presence of the little dog prevented this. Col. Guiscard had reached the door, paused, shook the lock, and as he did so, his little dog jumped on him. He turned and saw her.

“It has been locked,” he said. “What brings you here, *Madame*, by night, at this season, and alone?”

“For God’s sake,” she said, “tell me something about Felix.”

He shook her roughly off, for she had laid her hand upon the lappels of his coat, involuntarily, to detain him; and now he kicked and thundered at the door. A servant opened it.

“Enter, *madame*,” said Col. Guiscard, drawing back. She dared not disobey, and, with her face crimsoned, she passed him. All the footmen of Foxley saw her as she came in with him from the garden.

He opened the inner door of the conservatory, and there, too, she passed before him; but when she turned upon him to demand some explanation of his conduct—some apology, he was gone.

She unwound her lace scarf from her head and throat; but before she had recovered her self-possession or repaired her ruffled *toilette*, Mr. Rustmere came into the conservatory with a petition for a song. Her feet were damp, and her teeth chattered. As she re-entered the drawing-room, Col. Guiscard was stand-

ing at the fire. Lord Loudoun, Sir John Pawley, and others, were making up a whist table.

Whilst the piano was being opened, she went up to the fire, Colonel Guiscard did not address her. She would have given worlds to speak to him, but there was a something in his eye and in his manner which assured her she would only give occasion for fresh insolence.

She went to the piano. She preluded a little, and then struck up a wild old Breton air—a song that Felix loved, a *guerz* or peasant ditty of the country. She watched the change that came gradually over her hearer, for to her there seemed but one. His air of insolence softened into one of fixed attention; and, rising from his listless leaning against the fire-place, he bent forward towards her, all eye and ear.

The strain ceased, but she did not leave the piano. Satisfied with what her essay had accomplished, before the politeness of Lady Harriet could ask her to resume her singing, she had struck the first chords of the Marseillaise. She appealed not in vain to the Frenchman, the revolutionist, the soldier of the empire. Col. Guiscard drew nearer to her—nearer. His voice in the chorus joined with hers. But when after having sung three verses of the original, she began one that Felix had taught her—that Felix had composed, she observed Ferdinand's voice falter.

The song ended, she rose, but no one drew near to compliment her. The name of the air had been whispered through the circle, and the Blues shrank back as though there had been treason and revolution in her singing.

She stood by the piano putting on her gloves. At length she said, abruptly, trying to speak in a tone of indifference,

“And Felix—is he dead?”

“Who told you he was dead? Did Captain Warner?”

“Before I married him.”

“And marriage has taught you a mistrust of Captain Warner?” Amabel turned aside.

“Is Felix dead?” she repeated.

“Tell me all he told you.”

"That Felix was dead. Is he dead?" she said the third time. Col. Guiscard clenched his hand.

"*Felix is dead*," he said. "Ask me no more. Be satisfied with that half truth. He would not wish to live and know that fraud, and shame, and enmity had triumphed. Nor do you wish him living. His sighs would trouble the security of your peace. Better his loving heart should rest and be forgotten."

Amabel had sat down upon the music stool, and made violent efforts to control her tears.

"God knows what is the best for him and me," she said at length. "God knows!"

"How did he die?" she resumed presently.

"Ask your husband how he died!" he said in a low, distinct, but almost hissing whisper. "No man can better answer you."

"How so?" she cried. "How so?"

But Col. Guiscard turned away. He went up to the whist-table, and took a hand. For a few minutes she found it difficult to recover herself. She bent over the music books, that her heightened color and tearful eyes might escape notice, and was grateful to the company that she was left alone.

Dreary as the rest of the evening was, she stayed till the whist table was broken up, when she was obliged to inquire for her carriage.

Mr. Rustmere cloaked her, and conducted her across the hall. As she got into her chariot, Barba tried to follow her. She caught him in her arms, and strained him to her bosom with a kiss. As she did so, she remarked Colonel Guiscard at the door, with his eyes fixed on her.

She beckoned to him. He obeyed.

"May I take him?" she said, pointing to Barba.

"As you will."

"Thank you, for Felix's sake." She put out her hand to him. The carriage was about to start. He drew back without touching it.

"I should not have offered you, *Madame*, the gift you have been pleased to ask, lest your possession of my dog, after what these people round us may conclude this even-

ing might expose you to unfounded suspicion of previous acquaintance with myself and compromise you”

She pulled the check-string furiously, for the carriage had just started, and when the footman presented himself at the door, he found her holding the little creature in her arms, the light of anger sparkling in her eyes, and in her whole expression.

“Put out this dog,” she said, almost furiously. The order was obeyed. The glasses were pulled up. The carriage rolled on.

He had at least secured an influence with her. However she might think of him, *she would think*. She could not meet him again with indifference; there must be a consciousness in her manner, treat him how she would. She would act a part towards him, and whatever that part might be, it would avail him.

Ferdinand Guiscard was like a confident player, who, with a purpose in view, at every turn in the game takes his advantage. His adversary was inexperienced, sensitive, quick-tempered, and a woman.

CHAPTER IX.

As some dreamer,
Amid the wanderings of his troubled dream,
All on a sudden finds himself incoiled
In some strange guilt; tho' how it was he knows not;
Nor even if his; yet nathless shame and fear
Are all around him.

J. KENYON.

THE carriage rolled on. Some miles had been travelled, and it seemed to her as if the words of Ferdinand had just been spoken, as though his face still darkened the window of her carriage. She did not require to think—nor did she think—she had a vain consciousness that Felix was dead, and that his death, in some way, compromised her husband; but all this

was indistinct to her, her one engrossing recollection was, that she had been insulted, her one absorbing feeling was of impotent rage. Rage, for she was half a child. Rage, which made her beat her hands against the sides of her carriage, and which would have found relief in physical pain.

"That he should have dared . . . have dared . . . to suppose that I . . . to suppose that any one . . ."

Her anger choked her. And she began to think of revenge—of some retaliation for the unprovoked impertinence—of some motive for his words.

At one moment she would tell her husband—but she had a woman's dread of bloodshed. The thought was momentary. And after all, what could she tell her husband? Manner, which cannot be described, lends the point to an insult. She *had* been imprudent, and he had warned her.

She would never see him again. There could be no necessity for that. She would forget his insolence, and time would wear the offence away.

Then the memory of his manner presented itself poignantly and suddenly before her, and her purpose changed. She would go to him, demand the reason of his insult, to one prepared to welcome him with kindness—to a young, a trusting, and, she owned, a pretty woman. He should apologize, apologize upon his knees for his brutality. His insolence, if he dared any, should be overborne by her indignation.

As all these thoughts were passing through her mind, she had not noticed a certain indecision in the movements of her carriage; but now it stopped, and the sudden halt aroused her. She had just time to rise from her knees, for in her excitement she had thrown herself down in one corner of the carriage, and pressed her head against the seat, like an angry child, when the footboy opened the door, with an "If you please, ma'am, the dog follows us."

The little creature sprang into the carriage.

"You may drive on, William," said his mistress. "Take the dog to the stables to-night, and to-morrow morning, the first thing, ride over to Foxley, and take him back to his master."

And now, with little Barba in her arms, pressed to her heart, her thoughts flowed into another channel. She recalled, as connected with him, the bright days of the past, in vivid contrast with the present. It woke in her a pity for herself, and when the carriage stopped at her own door, she had long been engaged in brooding over, and magnifying, her own domestic sorrows.

"Is Captain Warner come home?" was her first question.

"Yes, ma'am, and is gone to bed," was her maid's answer. "He bid me get breakfast for him by six o'clock to-morrow morning."

Bella hurried up to her own dressing-room; and, as she passed a handsome mirror, which formed its chiefest ornament, it reflected back her form, radiant in beauty; for excitement always heightened it; and, pausing a moment, in spite of a choking in her throat, she gave vent to the feelings with which the sight inspired her, by a broken exclamation of "*Might compromise!*—he dared . . .!"

At that moment her eye fell on her watch and chain, her husband's present on her marriage. She raised them to her lips and kissed the name engraven on the watch-case, then flung it down on the table. "Oh! God," she said, snatching it up again, "I am very unhappy."

She opened her bed-room door and walked in softly. Her husband was sleeping. She went round to him and laid her watch and chain upon the bed, and knelt down, with her hands clasped over them, and leaned her head against his pillow. She did not weep, but her head was aching violently. Suddenly, the recollection came athwart her, that it was thus that she had knelt by Felix's side when she first saw him on board the Sea Gull, and she started up as though a serpent stung her where she had laid her head. Her movement startled the captain.

"Ha! little woman," he said, putting out his hand. "It is late—is it not? Have you had a pleasant evening?"

How tell him that it had been one of agony? She left the room without an answer, and the captain fell asleep again.

Later, she crept to her place beside him. Her last act was to snatch up the watch and trinkets she found lying on the coun-

terpane, and she fell asleep, her flushed cheek pillowed on the hand that held them, as though there were safety from some unknown peril, if these gifts of her husband were but near.

She fell asleep—strange as it may seem to the naturally wakeful; for there are persons easily exhausted by emotion; and, when she awoke, it was because her cheek was kissed, and her husband, dressed, was standing over her.

“Good bye, my little wife,” he said, “I shall not see you to-morrow, it is the day of the poll; but, the day after, I shall meet you and my mother at C——, and come home with you from the Chaiiring.”

“Oh! Leonard, stay a moment,” she cried, starting up with an awakened remembrance of the griefs of yesterday. “I have something I want to ask you.”

“Be quick, then. I am in haste,” he replied.

“I will not detain you. It was to ask a question—about Felix—Captain Guiscard”—she gasped, trying to collect her thoughts and to gain courage.

“What of him?” said the captain, tartly. “I thought you had forgotten him.”

“It was to ask you how you heard that he was dead?—at first, I mean.”

“Why do you ask? Have you any doubts of it, my dear?” said Captain Warner. “The official evidence is more convincing than if I had told you he had died at Cabrera, on only my own authority.”

“Cabrera! He died at Cabrera?”

“Cabrera. Yes. He died at Cabrera,” said the captain.

“Leonard,” she said, rising up in her bed with that strange look he dreaded in her eyes, “you have deceived me. Was that right? You know more than you have told me. You have deceived me, Leonard.”

“My love for you excuses me,” began the captain, with a weak attempt at gallantry. “The subject was unwelcome to us both,” he continued, “and I considered I had done my best, when I gave you the fact upon the best authority. Why are you dissatisfied? The man is dead. What has put him into

your head just now? Have you been visited by his ghost last night, little woman, in your dreams?"

"Hush! Hush!" said Belle, her dark eyes fixed upon his face. "This is no time to trifle. Were you concerned in it? How did you first hear that he was dead?"

"How could I be concerned in it? You know, as well as I, that Cabrera is an island upon which the Spaniards landed the wreck of Dupont's army. It was reported to me when I went there, by Sir Charles Cotton's orders, to carry relief to the prisoners on the island. I never saw him. It was a strange thing he should be there; and the whole business, as I heard it, was so inexplicable and so fabulous, that I had great doubt if he were really dead, until that letter came from Annesley."

"He had a brother, Col. Guiscard, whom I met—" began Bella.

"His brother!" interrupted Captain Warner. "Has that fellow been trying to hold any communication with you? I forbid you to see him. He is mad; I shall have to shoot him, or else get him put into a lunatic asylum. The rascal set upon me when I was in Paris, a year ago, with the Allies. Remember what I say, Belle, and have nothing to do with him."

He left the room, and she, turning on her pillow, hid her face in it, with deep-drawn sighs. Every now and then, as some recollection of her husband came to her, she would press her lips spasmodically upon her watch-case, or hold it shuddering from her, when dark thoughts arose, fraught with a nameless terror.

It was late when she got up—pale, languid, haggard, and little fit for the duties of the day,

The first person she saw was the old lady, who came in, as she sat at breakfast, to glean some account of the party.

"Very late, Mrs. Leonard. Much going out will not do, I see, for you. I never allowed my engagements to interfere with the breakfast-hour of the household, and never with the comforts of the late Mr. Warner. But then I was brought up an English wife. I never had any taste for the customs of foreigners; they breakfast in bed, I believe. Who was there last evening?"

Bella tried to enumerate the company.

"What did you say to Lord Loudoun?"

"I was not introduced to him," said Bella.

"What did Sir John Pawley say to you?" pursued the old lady.

"Nothing. Nothing of any consequence." Bella would not tell her the nightingale story.

"Mrs. Leonard," continued the old lady. "I want you to go with me to call upon Miss Armstrong. The carriage is to pick us up at the butcher's. By the way, I wonder you allow Goosefoot, contrary to my orders, to send you weighing meat with a neck of veal?"

"I really cannot go to-day. I caught cold, last night," said Bella.

Mrs. Warner was going to say something cross, about "absurd coddling" and "strengthening the constitution;" but she changed the remark into "Who is that?" as an open phaeton drove by the window.

"Lady Harriet Rustmere," said the servant, announcing her.

"I hope I see you in the enjoyment of your usual health, Mrs. Warner. My dear, excuse this early visit; but an election excuses everything. I am full of business. You look pale, you naughty child. Caught a cold, eh? I know how you got that cold last evening. I am going round to stir up some of our voters, and I want your presence and influence. It will give you an opportunity of seeing English character. Our people come out twice themselves at an election."

"You must excuse me, Lady Harriet. I have just declined to drive with Mrs. Warner."

"Pooh!" said Lady Harriet. "Mrs. Warner, I am an humble suitor to you on behalf of the good cause for the society of your daughter-in-law, and it is very disinterested in me to patronize her, for she cuts me out sadly with the gentlemen, particularly Sir John Pawley. I assure you, Mrs. Warner, that her conversation with Sir John Pawley last night amused us mightily. Such piquant questions!"

"You are deeper than many persons give you credit for, Mrs. Leonard. A mask of simplicity often covers a great deal

with foreigners. When I was a young wife I had some respect for my husband's family —— I was *English* to be sure," said old Mrs. Warner, with a look of thunder.

"I think I had better not go. I am really unwell," said Amabel, in a low voice, to Lady Harriet.

"Nonsense, child," began the other; but was interrupted by Bella's little footboy, in his stable jacket, who opened the door. Seeing company, he was going out again, but old Mrs. Warner called him.

"What is it, William?"

"If you please, ma'am, I have been to Foxley," said the boy, giving his hair three pulls to the three ladies, "and the gentleman is not staying there, but is over at C——; and he sends his compliments, and there is no answer."

"Answer!" said Bella, indignantly, meeting her mother-in-law's stare.

"Yes, ma'am, to the dog, from the French gentleman. But he sent word to know," continued the boy, anxious to do his commission thoroughly, "if master was to be out to-day, and what time you would be likely to be at home, ma'am."

"Well, to be sure!" said Lady Harriet, rising, when the boy had left the room. "Now it is clear a *beau* is expected, I shall not press you to go."

"Yes, Lady Harriet, pray—pray let me go. I had rather do anything than meet that man to-day," was Bella's eager answer.

"Mrs. Leonard," said the old lady, so soon as she could speak, "what errand did you send that boy upon to Foxley?"

"Col. Guiscard's little dog followed the carriage," she replied, looking the picture of confusion, "and I sent him back. I gave the boy no message. I wanted no answer."

"It was a case of love at first sight," laughed Lady Harriet. "But," she added, in a lower voice, "I cannot but suspect that you had met before."

CHAPTER X.

No demon, but a miserable man become savage and diseased from circumstances.—
S. MARGARET FULLER.

“WHAT a dragon she is!” cried Lady Harriet, when they were fairly rid of Mrs. Warner. “My wonder is that you put up with her.”

Lady Harriet was in an open phaeton, and it was bitter cold, though both ladies were cloaked and furred from heel to head.

“The weather really is severe for March,” said Lady Harriet. “Now tell me about Guiscard. Have you known him before, my dear?”

Bella denied she had, and made some remark about the continuance of the cold weather.

Lady Harriet turned her attention to her horses, and her companion was left at leisure to reflect upon the accidents which threatened more than ever to mix her name with that of Col. Guiscard.

They were barely out of the park gates when a horseman came in view. Lady Harriet saw him first, and cried, “Look, look, my dear. Is that your husband or your lover? Warner or Guiscard?”

As she spoke, Colonel Ferdinand pulled up his horse beside the carriage, and honored Amabel with a familiar stare.

She flushed with anger, shuddered, wrapped herself closer in her furs, and drew back into the corner of the carriage.

Col. Guiscard kept his place, and addressed his conversation across her to her companion. Under the influence of his steady stare she grew more and more uncomfortable.

As she turned over her situation in her mind, she suddenly became aware, that by thus keeping up a show of resentment, when so powerless to avenge her own wrongs, she was adding

to the triumph of her insolent tormentor. It was giving him to understand that he had an influence over her, and that his words and actions had the power to wound.

When she understood this she roused herself, sat up in the phaeton, and looked deliberately, without change of countenance, out of the carriage. She met his glances with a gaze of indifference, and made some trifling observation to Lady Harriet as though perfectly careless of the presence of Col. Guiscard.

This change did not escape him, and for a moment he was at a loss to what he should attribute it. A little reflection, however, on the suddenness of the alteration revealed the truth to him. He had not given her credit for so much spirit, and now, as the huntsman exults in the swiftness and subtilty of his intended victim, or the warrior in battle, may

Rejoice to feel
A foeman worthy of his steel,

this display of gallantry and spirit lent excitement to the game that he was playing to her ruin, and he began to feel a species of respect for her.

"I am glad I can admire her," he said to himself, musingly, as he checked his horse whilst making these reflections and determining his line of conduct towards her.

Resuming his place by her side, and continuing his conversation with Lady Harriet, he rode on, talking upon all kinds of subjects with a general knowledge and a fluency that proved him an adept in the art of conversation. Yet he talked mockingly; his observations were seasoned with a dry, telling epigrammatic raillery, the very thing to give success in a Parisian *salon*. He talked from the head, not from the heart; yet now and then in directing an observation to Amabel, he made her feel that something lay deeper in his heart to which she had the clue. Captain Warner had also a high reputation for conversational ability; but when he laid himself out to be agreeable, it was his good-natured heartiness that secured his pleasing. His efforts to please were all from himself and in himself. Provided only he was liked, he cared little for the intelligence or

the character of mind of his companion. Col. Guiscard, on the contrary, owed all his power of pleasing to the consciousness he gave to others that they were agreeable to himself. He exercised a magnetic influence, by means of which, in other minds, he reproduced his own.

Amabel was astonished at the effect of his conversation. The more agreeable she was compelled to acknowledge him, the more resentment she felt.

Her only thought was how she hated him, yet every moment was deepening an influence that she was not aware of; and increased the feeling of triumph at his heart, though it was no longer his policy to display that feeling to her.

Suddenly the carriage stopped at a road-side public-house, where Lady Harriet wanted to cajole the landlord.

"You need not get out here, my dear," she said; "sit still."

"Yes, Lady Harriet, I had rather," Bella replied, rising to follow her. She caught a sudden gleam from Ferdinand's dark eyes, such a gleam as shoots from the eye of the wild beast or the maniac, when they know their power is felt and that defenceless man is afraid of them.

Bella met the glance with firmness, called up all her resolution, drew her furs closer round her, and sank back into the carriage.

Col. Guiscard came round to her; she looked boldly out upon the landscape, with her face turned towards him. It was a cold, calm, vacant look, which seemed to take him in without observing him.

"Do I owe you no explanation of my motives?" he said, stooping towards her.

"None," she replied, looking at him firmly. "The fact of your insolent behavior was enough. I have no concern nor interest in your motives."

"But you cannot judge of my conduct without—"

"I have no curiosity to judge you."

After a pause, "I was a brute last night," he said.

She made no answer.

"You are very unkind!" He tried to take her hand. She drew it from him steadily.

"Sir," she said, "I am here, compelled to listen patiently, against my will, to any impertinence you may be pleased to address to me. Let that suffice. Do not presume to touch me!"

"I am ready to acknowledge," he said, not appearing to notice her indignation, "that, last night, I wronged you." A little movement of her eyelids only, told how much she felt that he had wronged her. "I thought you careless and insensible. Not the woman I had pictured to myself as her whose cherished name was on my brother's lips till he died."

"Oh! tell me how he died!"

"I dare not tell you how he died; but I was with him. Hunger, disease, and mental suffering did their work. He wasted day by day; but confidence in your love was his support. His eye beamed always when he spoke of you. So young! to be cut off by such cruel fate! So young! to be the victim of his love! And he who loved so passionately—whose very life was almost breathed away in words of love, to be so soon forgotten! Forgive me if I judged unjustly. It was only by appearances I could judge."

A pause followed. As soon as Bella could gain voice, she asked, "But why not tell me how he died? Why did he leave me?"

"Do you believe that, of his *own will*, he left Valetta? Have you never heard——. Do you believe that there has been no treachery to both of you? Is this your love? Can you believe all other men, and withhold trust from Felix only?"

"I do not mistrust. I only believe on evidence. Did not Felix leave me? Does not deep mystery hang over his departure?" said Bella, with some spirit, in spite of her tears.

"Poor child!" said Ferdinand. "It is better you should think so. I will not come with dreadful revelations to distract your married peace. Felix must still be the victim to hard thoughts; his shall be in death the same fate that in life his love would have accepted. He shall be sacrificed to the heart's peace of the woman he loved."

"Why sacrificed? Explain yourself. Col. Guiscard, I implore you to explain yourself. The truth cannot destroy my peace of mind."

"I dare not put your generosity to such a proof," cried Col. Guiscard. "Yet, for my dead brother's sake, I will not, on my own responsibility, withhold this knowledge from you. But, were I to reveal the truth, it must recoil on Captain Warner. Are you prepared to sacrifice your husband to the dead Felix, and do justice to his memory? Shall I tell you that which the man you have married has purposely concealed from you? Shall I bid you curse your marriage-day? Curse the fatal loveliness which tempted crime? Shall I harrow all the womanly tenderness yet lingering in your heart, both for the man who married and the man who loved you?"

"Hush! Hush!" cried Bella, starting up, and almost covering his mouth with her hand.

"Well, to be sure," said Lady Harriet, stepping into her carriage, attended by the landlord, bowing to her, behind. "Well, to be sure! I can make some shrewd guesses, Colonel Guiscard. (To Bergholt, Thomas.) My dear, I recommend you Owley. He is a Blue voter, and has very good things. I advise you to step in, whenever you come over."

"Lady Harriet," said Bella, clinging to her arm, "please take me home; I am really too ill to go further."

"Bless me!" said Lady Harriet, "she is pale. What have you been saying to her, Col. Guiscard? Never mind. Keep out of her sight. Tell the coachman to drive fast to The Cedars. We should be there quicker, if the carriage could get through Water-lane. Ride on, colonel;—that will do. I can attend to Mrs. Warner."

CHAPTER XI.

There are who, darkling and alone
Could wish the weary night were gone ;
Though morning's dawn can only show
The secret of their unknown woe.
Who pray for sharpest throbs of pain
To ease them of doubt's galling chain.
"Only disperse the cloud," they cry,
"And if our fate be death, give light and let us die."

KEBLE.—CHRISTIAN YEAR.

A RIVER winds through the village near which The Cedars stands. A tortuous and sluggish river, with the rich meadows of the valley on either side ; and, though navigable only for barges at the point we are describing, ten or twelve miles further on its course it opens out into a broad estuary, and ships of burden sail upon its waters up to its port, which stands not immediately upon the sea. The village itself, surrounding the fine church famed for its square tower, lies at the foot of the hill, crowned by the park of The Cedars. It consists principally of one long street with a branch to the left, leading to the water-mill, an ugly, square construction, which has a dam across the river, and where, when the wheels are at work, the floodgate makes a miniature cascade. The river, at this point, was spanned till lately by a wooden foot-bridge, across which, about one o'clock upon the morning of the morrow, Amabel was passing with her husband's little boy.

Already the child had learned to love her. Little as he had seen of his step-mother, he had found out she was a pleasant play-mate ; he knew she could tell funny stories ; he was sure of never being teased by her for childish attentions, and there was something about her which made him always confident of sympathy and love. Katie Warner she had rarely seen. The old lady had put her at a strict school in the neighboring village, and her Christmas holidays had been passed at Brighton with a kinswoman of her mother's, a Miss Taylor.

The boy, a pale and sickly child, with a high spirit, was boisterously glad of his release from Mrs. Mathers. He ran backwards and forwards like a dog before her, boasting of what he *could* do, and *dared* to do, with what we might call an *Irish* disregard of the current value of words. He was suffered to do and say pretty much what he pleased without reproof or observation, for the thoughts of his step-mother were pre-occupied, and there were cares that weighed upon her spirit which all his random prattle could not charm away.

"I hear something splashing along Water-lane," she said at length, rousing herself, as they stood upon the little bridge, with the mill lock on their left, and the second lock of the river at some distance on their right hand. Johnny paused a moment, and, holding by his step-mother's skirts, tried to climb up by the railing.

"Stand down, Johnny. Water-lane is deep. At this season," she added, "I fancy few people come down there."

"It's a bullock got in. He's got in there," said Johnny, jumping. "A great, big, fat bull. *I'm* not afraid of him. He'll run at *you*."

"Let us go and see," said Bella.

"Yes," cried the boy. "They drive them in here to rest on their way to London. They are sometimes very savage—*very savage* in this field."

"Stay here, then," said Bella, and hurried alone into the meadow. She parted the alders that overhung the lane, a torrent tributary of the river in winter—a bed of stones in summer-time.

"It is no bullock, Johnny," she cried. "You may come. It is a man and horse struggling in the water."

The horse was slipping upon the bed of slimy pebbles, and his rider was with difficulty holding him up. At the sound of her voice he turned towards her. Bella drew back suddenly. It was Col. Guiscard.

"Oh! see," shouted her little step-son. "They are letting out the water from the mill. He will get into the stream; it will carry him away. He will go floating, floating through the bridge out into the great, wide, big sea yonder."

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"Stay here, then," said Bella, and hurried alone into the meadow. She parted the alders that overhung the lane, a torrent tributary of the river in winter—a bed of stones in summer-time.

"It is no bullock, Johnny," she cried. "You may come. It is a man and horse struggling in the water."

The horse was slipping upon the bed of slimy pebbles, and his rider was with difficulty holding him up. At the sound of her voice he turned towards her. Bella drew back suddenly. It was Col. Guiscard.

"Oh! see," shouted her little step-son. "They are letting out the water from the mill. He will get into the stream; it will carry him away. He will go floating, floating through the bridge out into the great, wide, big sea yonder."

At this moment little Barba, who accompanied the Colonel, scrambled up the bank to where they stood. Col. Guiscard saw his danger. Bella saw it too. A few steps further, and his horse, swept off his feet by the rush of the seething mill-stream, would be dashed against the bridge, and drawn under it.

"Col. Guiscard!" she shouted. "Turn your horse's head. Here is a landing-place," and parting the bushes, she showed him a bullock track between the alders.

Reining his slipping, frightened horse with a powerful hand, he succeeded in turning his head towards her. The moment was critical. Bella looked on in terror. A moment more, and the snorting, dripping animal struck his fore-feet on the bank, and stood trembling and powerless, safe on *terra firma*.

Col. Guiscard sprang off.

"Now I can speak a few words with you alone," he cried, seizing her hand and pressing it warmly. "Forgive me!—forgive me, sweetest lady, whom I dared to wrong before I understood."

"Let me go, sir," cried Amabel, struggling to get free.

"Hear me," cried Ferdinand, on his knees before her.

"I will not hear, sir. Get up," she said, in a voice of great irritation.

"I came here to see you," said Ferdinand, slowly obeying her. "It is the last time. I am going back to France. Have you heard the news?"

"What?" she cried, with her manner changed at once. "Is Felix come?—Is Felix living?"

"Felix," he said, "died long ago. The emperor has escaped from Elba."

"Napoleon!" She clasped her hands, and for a moment both forgot their relative situations in one common enthusiasm.

"Now hear me. It is the last time I can explain," began the Colonel.

"I will not hear you," said Amabel. "You make me miserable—more miserable than I was before I knew you. I wished when we first met to have approached you as the brother of Felix, one dear to me—yes, *dear* to me, in that relation. You

repulsed me—you insulted me, and now you come to tell me, as you told me yesterday, when I could not resent it, that it was not at me alone you aimed your insults, but through me at my husband.”

“You have bitter thoughts of him,” he said, “or you would not so pettishly repulse all explanation.”

She made no answer, but turned away.

“Nay,” said he, “before you go, hear this. That Felix left a dying message for you, which I cannot, will not, am bound not to deliver till the mystery of his departure—the manner of his death has been revealed to you.”

She stopped, and looked at him.

“Captain Warner can do this,” he said. “Perhaps you have already questioned him?”

She made no answer.

“Had you been told by him I might have spoken.”

She pressed her hands upon her brow. She had no power to decide. She only felt that the moment was rapidly passing away for her decision. That she was called upon to choose between her first love and her husband. That whilst on the one hand this was the last opportunity she might ever have to hear the last words and justification of Felix, on the other it was a fearful thing for a married woman deliberately to choose to hear in favor of a lover that which she knew beforehand was to implicate her husband. But Captain Warner had not been frank with her in the first instance. There was the greatest sting.

Col. Guiscard stood and watched her. The struggle in her mind was his triumph. He had been aiming to produce it ever since he saw her. Whatever her decision in the case might be, it would avenge him of his adversary. Should her sense of allegiance, as a wife, yield to the desire to justify her early lover, he would build on this first step of conscious wrong the firm foundation of his future power. Even should duty prevail over love, he had his triumph—he had stuffed with thorns her marriage pillow.

God knows, poor child, how she would have chosen. Which-ever way it had chanced, she would have repented her decision.

Probably some accidental circumstance would have settled it; for, as a modern philosopher has observed,

“The power of accident is strong, where the strength of design is weak.”

The time was passing. She had lost the power to think; or, rather, her thoughts were wandering to happy days and sunny Malta, contrasting “what was now, with what had been.”

Leaning against one of the wooden posts which protected the little bridge from the intrusion of the cattle, with her arms close folded over her heaving bosom, Amabel Warner stood deciding her own destiny.

Her eyes were turned towards the foaming, eddying waters of the river, and as she watched the swift flowing of the current, a vague feeling absorbed all her thoughts, that it would be happiness thus to pass away into an unknown future, and leave the past behind.

Her choice? “I cannot tell, God knoweth.” She herself perhaps never knew. For the moments passed as swiftly as the waters; when suddenly there was uttered at some distance a wild, terrified, piercing cry. In a moment her still form was reanimated by terror. The child, whom she had quite forgotten in the deep and agonizing interest of her conversation with Ferdinand, had been amusing himself with the dog. Perhaps Barba had indulged some canine feelings in a bark of bravado at the cattle; at any rate he drew upon himself the attention of three or four young bullocks at the further end of the large field, and when Amabel was roused by Johnny’s frightened scream, these, with their heads down and their tails raised, were in full career after the dog, which ran after the child, who was hastening with all the speed that terror lent his little legs, directly away from Col. Guiscard and herself, along the narrow barge path that led beside the river.

With a scream more terrified, more agonized, more piercing than the child’s, Amabel, in her turn, ran in pursuit of them. The dog turned off to the left, the bullocks after him, and they were soon half a quarter of a mile from Johnny, at the further end of the field; but the child did not slacken his pace. In vain his step-mother called to him to stop. He ran on, still be-

lieving the dog and the oxen were behind him. There was a low fence and a ditch that separated this meadow from its neighbor. A hurdle had been put up where it crossed the path. The child, only anxious to put this barrier between himself and his imaginary pursuers, attempted to get round it on the river side. The green weeds on which he set his foot were treacherous. His little hands strove to grasp the hurdle; it trembled, flew from him, and he was in the water.

Amabel, who reached the spot a moment after, was about to plunge in after him, when she was seized and violently flung back by the strong arm of Col. Guiscard.

Recovering herself, she saw him throw off his coat, and spring from the bank into the rapid, rushing water. The river at that point, though not wide, was very deep, and one of the boys from the Grammar School had, the year before, been lost there.

The child had sunk, and came up, borne by the current, at some distance towards the other side of the river. The river was running very swiftly at the time, aggravated by the addition of the rapid waters from the mill-stream, but Col. Guiscard was a first-rate swimmer, and struck out boldly, though encumbered with his boots and spurs. A second time the boy sank. When he rose again his preserver was near him. He caught him by the little dress, that floated like the bell of some large flower on the surface of the water. They were close to the lock gates, and nearer to the right bank of the river than the left. It was useless to attempt to swim with his burden back across the stream. Col. Guiscard, with great exertion, for the bank was very steep, landed safely on the other side.

"Cross the field in a straight line," shouted Amabel across the water. "Take the lane behind the workhouse, and that will lead you to the back of our cottage."

She herself, taking the longer way across the bridge, followed them. Over the fields and through the lane by which she had directed him, she ran, without regard to paths or fences, or anything, save shaping a straight course. Her bonnet was flung back, her hair had been thrown down; the people who met her looked at her in astonishment. But she did not heed them; she had not breath to speak. She ran so

swiftly as to reach her own door at the same moment as Ferdinand, when, taking his insensible burden from his arms, she bore the boy up stairs, and laid him on her bed.

CHAPTER XII.

And here was plenty to be done,
And she that could do it great and small,
She was to do nothing at all.

R. BROWNING. FLIGHT OF THE DUCHESS.

"WILL he live?" cried Amabel to the apprentice of the village surgeon and apothecary.

Pale lips asked daily the same question, and weeping eyes fastened upon the solemn face of the physician, anticipate the reply.

As she spoke, she was kneeling by the bed applying warm flannels to the feet of the drowned child, and such other simple remedies as her experience suggested. She did not pause in her employment as she asked the question. It seemed as though she was afraid to lose some precious moment that might assist in his recovery.

Just then the bed-room door opened, and Mrs. Buck, the housekeeper, came into the room. She took the flannel out of the hands of Amabel, and remarked, as she did so, "Leave all this, if you please, to me. I am responsible for the dear child to Mrs. Warner. I have sent a man and horse after my mistress, who is gone to Miss Armstrong's to pass the day. You had better leave all this to the young man and me, and go down stairs, if you please, ma'am."

"I leave the child! I leave the child to you?" cried Amabel, looking up suddenly.

"You had better, ma'am. The child is not put under your care, but my mistress's."

Mrs. Warner entered. "She will settle it," continued Buck.

"Pray, ma'am, is it me, or young Mrs. Warner, that you wish should attend upon the child?"

"Mrs. Leonard," said the old lady, her lips quivering with emotion. "Leave this room; the rest of the house is clear."

Amabel rose from her knees, and cast an indignant look around her. The housekeeper and the apprentice were consulting over their patient's bed.

"Look as you will, Mrs. Leonard. Aye, look as proud as Lucifer, as bold as brass before me; but I have heard such things of you to-day as ought to humble you into the very dust," said the old lady.

"This is no place to quarrel, ma'am," said Amabel. "I at least respect a death-bed."

This said, she left the room. She heard the bolts drawn after her; but she could not tear herself away. She knelt down at the door, hearkening to every sound. She heard the servants' voices there; they were permitted to enter by the back staircase, whilst she was kept away. She heard the authoritative voice of Mrs. Buck, the solemn voice of the young man, the apothecary, the trembling voice of the poor grandmother; at last, a tiny, feeble voice, asking some incoherent question. She sprang to her feet with a joyful cry.

Then, at last, she went down stairs; her heart swelling with indignation against old Mrs. Warner, with contempt for the littleness which had exposed her before inferiors, and with deeply wounded pride. A servant, passing through the hall, gave her a letter, adding, "The gentleman desired me to say, ma'am, he should not leave C—— to-morrow, as he mentioned, but should put off his journey in hopes to hear from you."

Bella took the letter. Her heart beat as she opened it; but it was only an invitation from Lady Harriet to dine that day and sleep at Foxley, and go with their party to the Cbairing at C——. She stood with it in her hand before the fire, with many thoughts fast crowding on her mind, when a noise at the window drew her attention. It was Colonel Guiscard on horseback. He had ridden close up to the house, and was tapping with his whip upon one of the window-panes.

She threw open the window. "He lives!" she said. "Ho

lives! The gratitude of my whole life will be too little to repay you, Col. Guiscard!"

He leaned forward and took her hand.

"Oh! had you been but true to Felix longer—had you delayed this marriage—all might have been well. Felix's wishes would have been fulfilled. My life's devotion must have secured your happiness. And even yet——"

A rough hand from within pulled Bella from the window. Ferdinand waved a farewell and rode off. Bella turned and confronted Mrs. Buck, sent down by Mrs. Warner.

"My mistress desires you will keep to this room, ma'am, and not stir till she can see you, which will be after the doctor from C——, that I have sent to fetch, has been and gone. The dear child has come to himself, and spoken a little; but he had better not have spoken, for every word he said was worse to my mistress's heart than a dagger." Here Mrs. Buck's manner changed suddenly. Overcome by virtuous indignation, and, I may add also, with a deep regard for the peace and honor of the family, she exclaimed, vehemently, "Oh! you wicked—wicked foreign woman, you!"

It is easy to imagine the effect this had on Amabel's excited, wounded feelings, on a temper equally uncurbed and proud. This from an inferior, in her own house, and she powerless to resent it! Now, indeed, she felt utterly friendless, a foreigner, forlorn. She bit her lips till Mrs. Buck had swept out of the drawing-room, and stood, looking after her, without any change of countenance. She would not, for the world, have let her see how much her words had moved her. To be alone, struggling alone, with an injustice, how hard it is! How little the consciousness of innocence will bear one up, until, on principle, we have learned to rest satisfied with the testimony of a good conscience before God! Her conscience, however, would have reproached her had she consulted it, not in the way that Mrs. Buck imagined, but with a thousand instances of want of lovingness, of rebellion against the destiny assigned to her.

As Buck closed the door, she flung herself upon a sofa. She tried to weep, but she could not. She buried her convulsed features in the cushions and stamped her feet with rage, and

wrung her hands. By degrees, all this subsided into a sort of stupor.

At last something roused her. She looked up; it was snowing. The branches of the trees were becoming frosted; the grass was just covered with a transparent lace-work of snow. She got up and looked out of the window. Suddenly, the words of the prodigal occurred to her. She repeated them several times, thinking of Captain Warner. She felt she should be safe and happy under his care. She dreaded her own weakness. She was wounded by her inferiors; above all, she dreaded lest something he might hear from others might infuse a vile suspicion into his mind; and she was resolute to tear from him the secret of Felix Guiscard's death, however unwilling he might prove to part with it.

She was true to him; she was still true. And oh! how few supports were given to her faithfulness of heart amidst the trials of that hour. Why did he leave her so exposed? Why did he leave her doubtful about Felix? A little frankness, a little love would yet have saved her. She was resolved to arise and go to his protection.

* * * * *

The snow fell only in scattered flakes, as she went on foot along the avenue. She had wrapped herself in warm clothing and left the house without consulting Mrs. Warner. She was going to her husband, and to no one else was she responsible. Her intention was to go down to the village, and thence take the post-chaise to C——; but, as she mounted the brow of the hill, she saw it coming homewards, full of drunken electors, a drunken post-boy on the box, and the tired horses covered with sweat and foam. She paused and looked around her. She must walk to C——. She had no thought of turning back, and I believe her excitement would, without fatigue, have carried her there. Her last memory of her cottage home was as it lay half a quarter of a mile upon her right, its gable ends projecting through the shrubbery; its tiled roofs white with snow.

As she was turning away to continue her walk through the increasing darkness, her ear caught the sound of wheels upon

the gravel. It was the doctor from C——, who had driven in through the other entrance. She had not been aware of his arrival, and now stopped him, as he approached the gate, to inquire for his patient. "Doing well," was the substance of his answer. "A damp night," he added, "Mrs. Warner. The fogs of your valley induce ague. Let me advise your returning to the house; you may contract catarrh."

"Are you going to C——?"

"I shall be there in fifty minutes. Have you any commands?"

"I believe I shall ask you for a seat in your gig. I want to go to the Committee-rooms, to meet my husband. The village chaise is engaged, and the night is too riotous for me to go alone."

"I will make a point of seeing Captain Warner, and of assuring him the little boy is out of danger."

Strange, that wrapped up in the details of her own position, *that* reason for seeking him had not occurred to her. She seized it at once, however.

"No," she replied, "I will drive over to C—— with you. My husband will not be easy till he has heard how it occurred."

Seated beside the doctor, wrapped in her cloak and absorbed in her own thoughts, which, tending to no conclusion, served only to fatigue her mind, she drove up to the principal Inn in C——, then occupied by the Blue Committee. There was a good deal of excitement and some crowd before the door. As soon as the doctor could force his horse amongst the people, she sprang out, and, passing through a mob of electors, entered the Crown Inn, and asked the first waiter she met for Captain Warner.

"Captain Warner, madam, is gone, I believe, to dine at Mr. O'Byrne's with a large party."

"Gone!" she said aloud. She was smitten to the heart by the thought that at the moment when she so much needed his support, he had been attracted by her rival.

"I will go and make sure," said the waiter. "What name shall I say, ma'am?"

She waited a moment, and then Mr. Rustmere came out of a side room.

"What! you here, Mrs. Warner?"

"I want to see my husband."

"He is over at O'Byrne's. Can I do anything for you? You can't get at him to-night. It is a large party."

"You can order me a post-chaise," she replied, "for I must see him."

"There is not a chaise to be had this evening," said the waiter. "They are all taken up by the electors."

"I have my gig here, and am going home," said Mr. Rustmere. "You must come home with me. To-morrow morning I will drive you over. You will meet your husband at the Chairing. He will sleep at O'Byrne's."

"I had rather not," she said.

"But there is no alternative," said Mr. Rustmere. "You cannot pass the night alone in an inn in town."

CHAPTER XIII.

With cruel weight these trifles press
A temper sore with tenderness,
When aches the void within.

COLERIDGE.

As they drove, next morning, into C——, the crowd was great and vociferous. At the narrow end of the High street, several mob orators, mounted upon chairs, were haranguing, either upon the election itself or the escape from Elba. As the Rustmere carriage came in sight the livery was recognised, a large party of Yellow boys raised three groans for all aristocrats, and a tumult rose accordingly. Stones were thrown; coarse jests assailed the ears of Amabel; the coachman, fearing for himself, his horses, and his carriage, lost all presence of mind, and appeared anxious to turn off into the yard of the

Yellow inn—the Red Lion. The horses grew restive. The license of an election day—that day on which the mob asserts and exercises its rights of sovereignty,—treats its masters as its servants,—and lays bare, for the space of a few hours, all the passions, the rankling sense of injuries, the prejudices and hatreds that find their vent, at other times, only in low pot-houses—did not offer any protection to ladies when the party-badges that they wore had been disregarded, and the party-watchwords that they used had no influence to calm the popular rage. An English mob aroused must, indeed, be terrible to a woman and a foreigner. Lady Harriet, a person of much nerve, kept calm; but Amabel became thoroughly frightened. She lost her presence of mind; she screamed and struggled to undo the door of the carriage, hoping, probably, in the extremity of her terror, to escape on foot, unnoticed, through the crowd, the more terrible, because brutally jocular. She succeeded, in spite of her companion's efforts, in making her escape, and found herself almost immediately seized by Ferdinand Guiscard. The Abbé C— was with him, and the attention of the crowd being, by her movement, directed towards them, they were recognised at once with a groan of reprobation. Every vile epithet which national feeling had, for years, given to Bonaparte, was howled after them. Amabel had put herself in a worse position than if she had kept her seat in the Rustmere carriage. Followed, jostled, insulted with coarse words, and narrowly escaping being pelted with election missiles, the trio made their way into the Red Lion. Amabel was shown into a private parlor, whither the Colonel and the Abbé followed her. It was long before she could compose herself, or summon courage to look out upon the crowd that filled the street below.

A few doors above the Red Lion, and opposite to the Crown Hotel, where sat the Blue Committee, was the great Blue book-seller's and stationer's. Here Lady Harriet sat, the centre of a party of gentlemen. It was the head-quarters of the Blues, and a staging had been erected for the ladies' accommodation. Thither Miss O'Byrne rode up on horseback, and Captain Warner, smiling, talking, and triumphant, was at her side. His wife

sat watching him. He crossed the street, turned into the courtyard of the Crown, and went into the Committee-room.

A few minutes after, Mr. Rustmere, sent by Lady Harriet, came down the street, and entered the Red Lion. The crowd set up an ironical huzza when it saw the Blue leader passing over to the head-quarters of the Yellow party. He came upstairs to Amabel; gravely, but politely, offered her his arm, and told her she had better join Lady Harriet and her own party. He bowed to Col. Guiscard, and declined his escort for Mrs. Warner, stating that he was well known by the crowd, and perfectly capable of protecting her. As she passed along the street, she saw a servant-boy of Mrs. Warner's amongst the ostlers at the inn-door, and from him she learned the child was better; that Mrs. Warner continued at the cottage, and had, even in a few hours, made alterations in the establishment which seemed to indicate an intention to take everything into her own hands.

When Mr. Rustmere delivered her over to his wife, Lady Harriet seemed provoked at her imprudence; and the county ladies, gay, triumphant, and radiant in Blue ribbons, seemed to shrink from the bewildered, frightened foreigner, who wore no party badge.

Preparations for the Chairing went on. A passage was made through the crowd for the procession; blue flags of every shade were gaily waving; the city bells were ringing; bands of music were tuning. The Blue platform was brought forth, borne upon the shoulders of a dozen stalwart husbandmen, covered with Blue favors, on which, standing before an arm-chair,—blue damask decked with silver,—the new member, in full yeomanry uniform, was to be paraded bowing through the town, surrounded by his committee on horseback, and his principal supporters. Just as the procession was forming, Captain Warner came out of the inn, entered the stationer's house, and came out upon the staging. His wife rose, seized both his hands, and drew him into an inner chamber.

"Oh! Leonard, I have so much to tell you," she began.

"Well, my love, tell me another time," he answered. "Is not this great news?"

"You do not know what has happened," she continued.

"What has happened?" he replied. "Is anything amiss? My mother" he looked round him with alarm. "Why is she not with you?"

"She is well enough. But little Johnny has been nearly drowned, and it was my fault. He is better now."

"Good heavens! How did it occur?" cried the captain, beginning to work himself into a fuss, in the midst of which, as his wife was soothing him and explaining the accident, he was summoned to the Committee-room.

"Thank God," he cried, "it was no worse. Kiss the children for me. Belle, my little wife, I am here to say good-bye. I'll write to you from London. This landing of Boney's has given me a ship. I have a letter from the Admiralty in my pocket, ordering me, without delay, to Spithead, to take command of the Magician. I shall be off the moment that this thing is at an end. My post-chaise is getting ready."

"Oh! Leonard, do not leave me!" She clung to him.

"Nonsense! Nonsense!" he replied, half-laughing at her tears. "Cheer up, little woman, I shall not be long away. You shall hear from me. I may stop a day or so in town."

"Captain Warner, you are wanted, if you please, sir," said a waiter.

"There, there, my time is up."

"Oh! Leonard, what is to become of me?"

"I must go, my little woman," cried the captain. "If I am delayed at Portsmouth, I will write for you to join me; but I hope to be off at once for the Mediterranean. I leave a credit for you at the bank. Good bye! Good-bye!" he repeated, each time with a kiss. "Give my duty to my mother. Kiss the children. Good bye! Good bye!"

She saw him mount his horse and bow to Miss O'Byrne. He looked up with a smile to catch her eye. *He* was full of excitement;—glad to be employed.

He was gone! And Amabel was left;—left a stranger amongst strangers. The seafarer, wrecked and destitute upon a hostile shore! She could not rejoin the gay party on the staging. Lady Harriet came into the room and tried to comfort her.

She urged her to forget her grief, and return with them to Foxley. This invitation was very acceptable to Amabel. A thought, a hope, a plan of escape possessed her. She was already resolved not to go back to Mrs. Warner. Her husband being ordered to the Mediterranean, there was a chance of return to her own happy Maltese home. She would write for his permission to live, during his term of service, with Dr. Glascock or her uncle. From the former she had, a few days before, received a letter, the first he had written to her since her marriage. She had not shown it to her husband, partly because he had always been pre-occupied with the business of the election, partly because it contained several remarks very far from complimentary, upon her marriage.

"Should you ever be in want of protection or a home," it said, "remember Malta. The time may come when, in the general wreck, you sink your pride."

She wrote old Mrs. Warner a civil note with a bad pen; desiring her to forward her clothes and maid to Foxley. That done, she resigned herself to Lady Harriet. But, at the time, she was not aware that the invitation had been extended to Col. Ferdinand and the Abbé, as, after the events of the morning, their stay at C——, amidst all the excitement of a coming war and the license of an election, was not considered likely to be safe or very agreeable.

So Amabel returned to Foxley. As soon as she could escape to her own chamber, she threw off her cloak and bonnet, and seating herself at a table, began a letter to her husband. The tender tears had dried that she had shed for his departure. During her drive to Foxley, she had been meditating upon her position and her wrongs. She says herself of this letter, that it was "stiff, cold, and harsh. I tried to strip my remonstrance of all passion. I succeeded in making it bare of feeling too."

She told her husband that she would not, during his absence, submit to Mrs. Warner; that every house must have its own sole head, and that she was a stranger in her own establishment. That her married life had been anything but a happy one; that she pined for her home in Malta; that her uncle or Dr. Glascock would still receive her. She told him, too, that

his conduct had been far from frank with reference to the death and disappearance of Captain Guiscard ; and desired him, rather than conjured him, ere the moment when his explanation would satisfy her doubts had passed away, to tell her all. She even hinted at his preference for Miss O'Byrne, adding that she knew his choice of herself had not been wisely made, and that he, as well as herself, was sensible that, for the good of both, it had been best that they had never been united.

This letter she put into the post that night, and directed it to his London lodging. This done, she went down stairs, and found there Col. Guiscard and the Abbé.

The colonel, that evening, paid her much attention ; and, softened towards him by his bravery, and emboldened by a sense of comparative independence, she allowed him to approach her. He was calm, courteous, polished, and respectful. He avoided all exciting topics. She talked to him of Brittany, and there was something in the tones of his voice that reminded her of his brother. It was the first time she had ever *felt* the relationship.

The next day passed. It was Thursday. A great *fête* was to be given by the Rustmeres the next evening, and Amabel assisted Lady Harriet in making preparations.

On the morrow, she watched with eagerness the post-bag, which, at breakfast, was handed to Mr. Rustmere. There was no letter for her, and her heart sank within her. The making of jellies, the preparation of lemonade and sugar-baskets went on ; for, in those days, such fanciful cookery was done at home in country places. It was not yet the era of Strasburg pies, habitual champagne, or the discovery of Lake Wenham.

Amabel was skinning almonds when she received a summons to the drawing room. A drawing-room, stripped bare of furniture and carpets, the doorways muslined, and its nakedness masked only, like that of our first parents, with green leaves, is a solemn and a cheerless sight on the morning of a festivity ; nor was it made less awful to poor Amabel by the appearance of Mrs. Warner. Dressed in her black pelisse, and frowning under her black bonnet, she stood in the centre of the bare floor with a letter in her hand.

"Pray, sit down, Mrs. Warner," said her daughter-in-law, proceeding to drag forward the hard end of a rout bench.

"I shall not sit down in this house, Mrs. Leonard," was the answer.

Each party stood a moment waiting the commencement of the other, when suddenly Mrs. Warner opened upon her daughter-in-law a broadside of the bitterest reproaches. Amabel was struck with astonishment by hearing how circumstantially every one of her acts and words had been reported, and how cruel had been the construction put upon them by her mother-in-law. At first she was made angry; then the terrible distress of the old lady at the scandal brought upon her house moved her. With tears, and prayers, and asseverations of innocence, she tried to make an impression on her. But the respectability of Mrs. Warner was inflexible. She seemed to think the occasion for talk given to the neighborhood a sin unpardonable. Amabel found that the only basis for anything like a reconciliation would be her surrender at discretion; the relinquishment of her separate establishment; her residence henceforth under the old lady's roof, and complete subjection to her will in all things; her instant removal from Foxley; her renunciation of all society during her husband's absence, and of all wish for change, of all predilection for anything French, either in taste or manners.

These conditions were based upon a sentence she had received that morning in a letter from her son, which she showed to Amabel.

"I am quite unconscious of ever having given her cause of complaint against me. The tone in which she writes is most extraordinary. About that early lover of hers, I have told her all I know, though she prefers not to believe me. I shall answer her from Portsmouth; but, meanwhile, be pleased to tell her that I entirely disapprove of her joining me at Malta. I think, with you, she has had enough of foreign association, and should wish her to give up our own residence at the cottage, and remain with you while I am away. My outfit and my table are expensive, and, during my absence, by giving up our separate establishment, we may save a little money."

These words hurt Amabel more than all that had come be-

fore. It was too much that her letter should be treated cavalierly by her husband,—its answer so carelessly postponed,—that she should be considered as a whimsical young girl, whose fancies must be overruled for her own good,—her hopes all dashed,—her doubts not even answered,—her indignant remonstrances pooh-poohed,—her feelings disregarded! This last drop crowned the cup of all her fancied wrongs and sorrows. She made no allowance for the haste, the worry, the character of the writer.

She lost her self-command. She burst into a torrent of reproach to Mrs. Warner, who left Foxley, shaking off the dust of her feet against it and its inhabitants, and bitterly distressed, it must be added, at the result of her visit on the prospects and happiness of her son. "I have one way left me for escape," were the last words she heard from Amabel, as she departed, "and, come what may, I will never—never live with you!"

CHAPTER XIV.

And to be wroth with one we love
Doth work like madness on the brain.

COLERIDGE.—CHRISTABEL.

"Did you ever," says my father, in that account of his experience which he has added to our narrative—"Did you ever see a strong man bowed to earth by a tornado of misfortune? Recall the agony you may have witnessed, as you peruse this portion of our story, or else thank God you never looked upon such sorrow. Men are sooner struck down, I think, than women. One can see at once on them the scathing change made by calamity; women seem to wither slowly as affliction becomes sobered into a settled sorrow."

My father says that, on the morning of this Friday, he went, by appointment, to join Captain Warner, at the lodgings in Warwick street, which he had always occupied when a single

man in town. My father had received his lieutenant's commission, and was appointed to the *Magician*. He was to breakfast with his captain and accompany him down to Spithead, where the frigate was lying at anchor.

When he went into the room, he found his captain dressed, holding his watch and an open letter in his hand. My father says his look of agony was such as is sometimes seen upon the faces of the dead in battle.

"Eat your breakfast," he said, almost fiercely, pointing to the untouched food upon the table; "that is, if you want any—and come along."

"The coach does not start till ten, sir," said my father.

"It does, sir," said Captain Warner.

My father sat down to table.

"Theodosius," said Captain Warner, "how far are you disposed to serve me?"

"In anything, sir. Try me." His mother was own cousin to Captain Warner.

"I mean," said the other, hurriedly, "would you follow me, were I to desert the ship? She is to sail with the first wind that will carry her down Channel. I must settle, before I join her, an account of life and death. Will you stand by me?"

My father started up. "Yes, sir," he cried, flattered by the service required of him. It was evident he was asked to be the second of his captain.

"I ask you," Captain Warner went on, "because you are my kinsman—because I should be losing time were I to attempt to seek another friend."

"Never fear, sir," cried my father, "we'll catch up, sir, with the *Magician*."

"Do not count on that, sir," sternly replied Captain Warner. "You may be broke and I be shot by a court-martial."

Then the two men in silence left the chamber. A word from Captain Warner settled their destination. My father found they were going into the Eastern counties. The splendid coaches of that day, if they suited with your time, were surer in their speed than posting. As they stood waiting in the yard of the Bull Inn, Aldgate, Captain Warner, without speaking,

put a letter into my father's hand. The letter was one he had received that morning, sent up express by Mrs. Warner. My father says it left no doubt upon his mind of the infidelity, or, at least, the culpable imprudence of Mrs. Leonard Warner. The facts old Mrs. Warner knew are known more fully to the reader; the deductions and exaggerations she engrafted on them he may conceive. The captain saw a man he knew mounting the box, and took his place inside. He concealed his face as much as possible during the whole journey. When they got out at C——, my father, for the first time, obtained a full view of him, and found the day had made him look years older. The long, light hair, which generally was brushed back stiffly from his brow, seemed to have grown suddenly lank; already he looked thin.

"Horses!" he shouted to the waiter at the Crown Inn. "Horses and a chaise to Foxley."

"I beg your pardon, captain; but I fear we can't," said that functionary. "Everything we has is took up already as it were to Foxley. They have been undistinguished in their invitations, sir. It is, sir, you know, sir, Lady Harriet Rustmere's great Blue Ball."

"Who is that? Is that you, captain?" said the landlord, coming out of a side room. "Glad to see you. Want horses to Foxley, do you say? I think your lady has engaged my last," referring to a long ledger. "Our very last pair, this afternoon, and a chaise from the Red Lion. What was it, William? Something queer, I'm thinking."

"Only, sir, that Mrs. Captain Warner wanted a chaise and horses on to London, to pick her up to-night at twelve o'clock at the London-road gate of the Park at Foxley. I sent her word there was nothing she could have but an old yellow chariot at the Red Lion, and our boy could not go with her no further than Witham. I wanted to know if the chariot would do, and the boy thought it might, as Mrs. Warner told him they wouldn't be over two, and not a party." -

Poor Amabel! Her ignorance of the laws of English posting had led her to furnish this information to her messenger, a boy who rode that afternoon to C—— on a cook's errand for



lemons. She thought of taking her maid with her in her flight, but had not made up her mind, nor had she told her.

"Where is that carriage?" said Captain Warner.

"Getting ready, sir. Will you have it?"

My father replied "Yes;" for Captain Warner could not answer.

Belle, with a fixed purpose of escape deep in her heart, showed herself that night in the Rustmeres' ball-room. Her wrongs appeared to justify an extreme measure upon her part. Her mind was made up not to live with her mother-in-law, in the absence of her husband. During the last three days she had been maturing a plan of escape, to take effect provided she received no favorable response to the letter of entreaty she had addressed to Captain Warner. She was resolved to go to Malta, and place herself under the protection of her friends. She knew that Doctor Glascock would receive her, and she thought she might dictate terms by his advice which would secure her emancipation from old Mrs. Warner. But, having assumed this position of independence, it seemed to her but right that she should know the ground on which she stood. As she could get no explanation from her husband with reference to the death of Felix Guiscard, she determined to demand that which Ferdinand had promised her. She knew that his reluctance to enlighten her had been a feint. She knew, also, that, having listened to what he had to say, he would conceive himself possessed of a certain power over her; and she had begun to fear him. It occurred to her that by a sudden flight from Foxley she might elude him, and, in a moment of childish frenzy, ordered a post-chaise from C—— to pick her up, at midnight, at the eastern gate of Foxley. She said not a word to any person of her purpose, fearing to leave some clue which might put her in his power. Her preparations had been made, her few clothes packed, and it only remained to hear the history, the message, the dying words of Felix. For this she now entered the conservatory, leaning on the arm of Col. Guiscard.

"I am come here to listen to you," she said. "You have a

message and a narrative to give me. You may not have another opportunity. I will receive them now."

"Are you prepared?"

"Perfectly."

She sat down on a sofa, put there for the guests, and he sat down beside her. Whatever emotions may have agitated her while he spoke, she made no observations. Many dancers during the next two hours came into the conservatory, and heard him earnestly addressing her, and went away to make unkind remarks on the flirtation going on between the French colonel and Mrs. Warner.

COLONEL GUISCARD'S NARRATIVE.

..... "When the army of Dupont was surrendered at Baylen," continued the colonel, after relating how Felix had been kidnapped on board the Dodo, in 1809, in Malta harbor,* "the regiments then on their way for its reinforcement were, by the same engagement, delivered over to the Spaniards. The corps in which I served was hurried on to join the prisoners taken by the Spanish ships at Cadiz, after the defeat of Trafalgar. These wretches had been removed, before we joined them, from the horrible prison-ships of Cadiz to the Ile de Leon. Thence we were sent, after a few months, to the desert Island of Cabrera. We left our Spanish prison under a belief that the Spaniards, at last mindful of the faith of treaties, were about to permit us to return to our own land. At Palma, the chief town of Majorca, after a suspense of forty days, we first learned our destination.

"Did you ever hear of Cabrera?—of the horrors of Cabrera—where Spanish cruelty to us, betrayed yet never vanquished, gained us, at least, compassion from every Englishman, *save one*, who visited our charnel-house? Cabrera! Where the most tried courage sank beneath the hopeless horrors of our

* It was natural he should believe, and that his brother should believe this outrage the work of Captain Warner. As all that passed on that occasion has been circumstantially related in the seventh chapter of the First Part of this volume, wisdom will justify me in not here repeating it.

situation; for the soldier who in the hour of excitement braves even reverses, sinks when starvation and disease become his only enemies, and his faculties have no other employment than daily warding off the slow approaches of these stealthy terrors.

"We came to Cabrera six thousand men. Scarcely a third of our number, after a residence of three years upon the island, left its arid shores. Upon a pile of barren mountain ridges,—of steep rocks,—six thousand men were landed, almost without clothes. Soon many of our party were entirely denuded. No habitations were to be found, save the ruined walls of an old Moorish castle, nor had we the means of building more than wretched huts of branches, brought, with immense labor, from a distant corner of the island, where, in the clefts of the most rugged rocks, grew a few stunted trees. We had but a bare sufficiency of water to sustain life, and even of this there was only a precarious supply. Our provisions were sent every four days from Majorca, but were sometimes delayed by weather or by wilful malice, when hundreds died of famine.

"What think you of the day's nourishment which Spanish cruelty doled out to us—six ounces of bread and a handful of dried beans? Remember, too, that we were nearly destitute of clothing; that previous suffering had shaken the most vigorous; and, at a time when moral strength alone could supply the decay of physical powers, our wretched masses lost the last stimulant of courage, the hope of an ultimate return to their own land.

"Our troops, with incredible labor—for we were deprived of tools—built huts of boughs, and founded a sort of colony, not only near the landing-place, but on the southern shore of the island. The officers at first took up their residence at the castle.

"The privations we had suffered, our present misery, the fearful power of the sun by day, the sudden chills of night, and, worst of all, our total ignorance of the probable duration of our sufferings, broke up the most robust constitutions, and gave rise to a thousand shapes of disease. Ophthalmia, dysentery, scurvy, quartan fever, ravaged our ranks, yet might have been averted had we had it in our power to procure a little

wine or fresh vegetables. Some were carried off in a few hours, and their companions *envied them*. Some lingered out their term in silent suffering, and when strength was entirely expended, sank down and rose no more. Dead bodies were to be found everywhere. They were picked up in solitary places, like worn out carrion driven apart to die. At length, upon the shores of the bay to the south-west, beside the only accessible spring of fresh water in the island, we obtained leave to erect a few frail tents, and paid them honor by the name of hospital.

"I was one of the first of the miserable wretches received there. They carried me to one of the tents that stood highest on the hillside. Once, when my senses were troubled by delirium, it seemed to me I heard a familiar voice—a voice of home. The delirium lasted but a moment. They were carrying a prisoner to a neighboring tent already crowded with the dying, a prisoner who had been brought in the bread boat from Palma.

"I might have been three days in the hospital, when one night a fearful storm broke over the island. Torrents descended the steep sides of the surrounding mountains, the waters in their course bearing down enormous stones. They came down like a deluge. The floods went on increasing, and the waters every moment accelerated their course. We heard their noise as we lay powerless extended on our straw. The roar of the waterfall came nearer and nearer, as the floods bore down before them all that opposed their passage. Loud as the wind howled, louder was the thunder. Above it rose now and then a piercing shriek as of death agony.

"We lay and listened. It seemed as though the waves of the ocean were rising in fury, threatening to submerge the island. Thus passed the night, and with the dawn of morning came a momentary calm. One shriek borne past me by the tempest, had awakened in my mind the remembrance of the passing delirium of the day before. Full of vague apprehensions, and strengthened by the excitement of my fears, I managed to drag myself upon my hands to the tent door.

"It stood alone!—A saving rock had broken the force of the torrent that had descended from the mountains. Everything else had been borne away by the fury of the waters. Tents

and straw, the dying and the sick, had all been swept away. Many lay dead at the foot of the hill, down which they had been rolled, like stones, by the rush of waters. Many lay with their limbs broken, their bodies covered with mud and sand.

“Over one body, apparently lifeless, and half buried in the waters of the now rising tide, a little dog—I had not known there was a domesticated creature on the island, save the one ass of our poor soldiers—a little white dog kept his watch, and had succeeded in dragging the face he licked tenderly out of the water. His mournful bark called attention to the spot. Some of the soldiers hastened down, and raised the body. There was life remaining, for we heard a groan.

“They lifted it, and bore it up the hill, the dog following. An instinct prompted me to drag myself forward. I recognised the features. It was Felix, my younger brother, to whom I had held a father’s place, whose welfare had ever been dearer to me than my own.

“His lower limbs had been paralysed (we all suffered from paralysis), the wound in his breast had opened, nothing of life seemed to be retained save his powers of acute suffering. He knew me at once. Brotherly anxiety restored my strength. The surgeon came; we bent over this body of living death, every care we could bestow was lavished on him. He was laid upon my straw, and I became his nurse, but in the whole island there was not found one linen rag with which to bind his wounds. The only medicines possessed by our surgeons, and administered to all the sick, were quinine and sulphuric acid.

“I watched him day and night. He was my only brother—the child confided to my care—my only domestic affection. Your name, even in his agony, hung on his lips. Long before he could coherently relate his story, I knew the character and person of the woman he adored. At last summoning all his strength, he told me of the loss of his ship, of his sickness at Malta, of your tenderness, and of his love; of the proposed exchange of prisoners, of his abduction in the night-time *by his rival*. How he was carried, bound and gagged, on board Captain Warner’s ship, which had already put to sea. How

during the night a Maltese cattle-boat came alongside, and he was transferred into her. How, after his robbery and narrow escape from murder, the boat shaped its course for the coast of Africa. On the way, falling in with a Spanish vessel he was put on board of her and carried to Majorca, where exposure, distress of mind, recent illness, and the acute suffering of his bonds, which were never relaxed by the wretches to whom the malice of his English enemy confided him, brought on paralysis. At Palma, in this condition, he was shipped on board our bread-boat, and thrown upon our rock to die.

"A brother's hand was there to soothe his sufferings, or at least to endeavor to mitigate them. I might have saved him, but for the relentless cruelty of his enemy.

"Your little dog was his sole treasure; he had saved its life through a thousand dangers, yet our starving comrades looked at it with wolfish eyes. Misfortune had isolated the prisoners, nothing united the sympathies of our miserable society but the arrival of our provision boat. One day it did not come. I can see our famished soldiers watching for it from the mountain top from the break of dawn. In fine weather we could see the entrance of the port of Palma, but not a sail clouded the horizon. Neither that day nor the next.

"One hundred and fifty of our number died in those two days of hunger.

"Some died in the ravings of delirium, some shrank from us into corners and into caves to die. The rats and mice upon the island had been eaten, recourse was had to grass and roots; amongst the latter we fancied we had discovered a species of potato, and it was greedily devoured before, by its effects, it was discovered to be *poison*.

"On the third day it was proposed to kill the ass, the soldiers' only object of affection, the original inhabitant of the island. Our dying soldiers would not have permitted the sacrifice had it not been enforced by all the authority of their officers.

"Except myself. I was away. I had scaled the tops of the highest hills. I had gone where only the brooding sea bird ventured, or the shy goat of Cabrera could climb.

“Some might say the deed was selfish, but my brother's life seemed to hang upon that of your little Barba; the soldiers had resolved on sacrificing the animal, and at Felix's earnest request I took him away in the night. I was pursued—pursued with all the energy of famine. But, one by one, my pursuers dropped off. Two fell through weakness, and perished in the mountains. At last, but two were left, swift-footed, and as sure as swift, for they were Corsicans. I hid myself in a cleft of the steep rugged limestone. Under the shadow of fantastic rocks I continued to creep upward. But this course was slow; they gained on me, for I was weak, and were at last so close that the noise of their panting reached my ear. Suddenly, when but a few feet from where I lay concealed, they seemed at fault. One pointed upwards to a lichen-covered rock, and seemed to find in it a resemblance to some part of my apparel. The other objected that I was probably more near. They parted. And when but a hundred yards asunder, the one who thought me near caught the gleam of the white coat of your little Barba. With a quick cry, to call his comrade back, he sprang towards me. I had a pistol in my hand. My pistols were almost the only fire-arms we had smuggled on the island. I fired. The ball took effect; he gave a sudden bound, and fell backward over the escarpment of a rock behind him. The other heard the shot, and saw the fall, without catching sight of me. As I expected, he gave up the pursuit and hastened towards the body of his comrade. I pushed upward, and soon found refuge in one of the stalactital caves not uncommonly found in the islands of the Mediterranean. Here I continued many hours in concealment and in safety, when at last from my eyrie, which had an out-look northward, I caught sight of a sail. It came nearer and nearer. It attracted every eye in the island. It was the provision boat from Palma. Our necessities were so great that ere we cursed man, we thanked God. It had been delayed only by the local jealousies and squabbles of the Spanish officers. I hurried to the shore to be amongst the first to claim my portion. In general the officers and non-commissioned officers formed messes of seven, and by this

arrangement the starving pittance was made to go further than when each man ate his portion by himself alone, the less provident soldiery devouring their four days' rations as soon as they were put into their hand.

"As the little brigantine approached, the excitement of the haggard crowd grew terrible. Every tack she made which seemed to take her off her course, occasioned the utmost agitation. The sick and dying had been brought down to the sea-shore by their debilitated comrades, and were encouraged to fix their eyes on her approach, that they might live till food arrived. Many cast themselves into the sea, while she was yet far distant, and swam out towards her, hoping that some fragment of food might be thrown them. At length she was run up as usual almost upon the shore, but instead of the twenty men whom custom permitted to board her, a mixed multitude, careless of life, was in a moment on her decks, upon her sides, and over her bulwarks. For the first time since our arrival in the island, the authority of their officers was unable to restrain the famished crowd, and to obtain order and regularity in the distribution of the provisions. Hunger even laid aside its reverence for the bread. At other times, the smallest fragments that had been broken off in landing were picked up with respectful care, and placed upon the loaves to which they belonged. On this occasion the food was torn in pieces with a selfish recklessness of waste. Happily they had sent us a double allowance of provisions.

"Besides the cavern, with its running waters pursuing their clear limpid course over bright golden sands, of which Don Raphael, Prince of the *chevaliers d'industrie*, gave Gil Blas the description, there are, as I have said, other grottos in Cabrera, and I had had the good fortune to light upon one unknown, apparently, to any of our comrades.

"Felix, who had no claims on the *camaraderie* of the officers, who, officer himself, yet not of our corps, nor of our service, felt himself in an isolated position, listened eagerly to a proposition that I made of carrying him by night upon my shoulders into the hills, to hide ourselves in this cavern, near which there was a small pure spring unknown to the other

prisoners, and indeed inaccessible to them for purposes of supply. The affair of the dog had not contributed to make us popular, and Felix trembled for its life should any second detention deprive our famished ranks of their supply of food.

"For ten days we continued to occupy our grotto. Its humidity was unfavourable to the health of Felix. There was a carpet of close turf near its entrance, on which he used to sit and gaze on the fine sea view, only bounded by the horizon. Here his talk was all of you. Here it was I learned to know you—the Peri of his Paradise; his ministering angel. Half child, half woman, he described you. Woman in mind, child in your powers of enjoyment. A woman in sensibility, with a child's power of trustful loving; with a strange wise sincerity of thought, and simple truthfulness of action. A grace more striking in your mind than in your person, though that was—oh! how fair! He never felt you could misdoubt him, and strong as circumstances might appear against his truth, he felt your love was stronger. Weak as he was, his mind never dwelt upon the possibility of a final separation. He would live and enjoy heaven. A heaven of love, a heaven of happiness, heaven with you. You had called him back to life, and that life was devoted to you. The remembrance of distress, privation, weakness, all would pass away when he again sat at your feet, or held your warm soft hand. He swore by the name of all he counted holy to be true to you. It needed no oath from your lips to make him trust you.

"He confided to me your claims upon our patrimony in the last conversation that we held. He spoke for the first time of his death upon the island as a possible eventuality, and gave me a solemn message to you should he die, and I survive him. What that message was, I owe it to the stern remembrance you have shown of your position as a wife, in opposition to any zeal or anxiety you might have shown for my brother's justification, *not to reveal unless you require me.*

"They may be called his dying words. For, as he uttered them, death was approaching him. We were sitting on a rocky point above our grotto, watching the approach of a

vessel of war. As she came near, she showed the English ensign. Soon all was confusion and excitement in the island. The vessel approached our landing-place. What news might she not have on board! She let go her anchor some two hundred yards from the little beach, and in a moment the sea was alive with our men swimming off to her.

"My God! what an impression their wasted appearance must have made upon our enemies! They were at first disposed to show great kindness to our miserable hordes. The captain received some of our officers in his cabin. The men gathered round our soldiers, inquiring by signs into their wants, and with rough hearty gestures expressing commiseration. The desire to relieve our sufferings was so great that the captain gave permission to his men to subscribe, if they pleased, three days' rations for our use, and made a distribution amongst the naked of all the spare slops in the vessel. I had not been on the shore when the ship came to an anchor, but now, seeing what was going on, and in the hope of food, I descended from the steep hills in the centre of the island, and made my way towards the little town of huts which our people had built upon the landing-place.

"As I went down, the thought presented itself, that I would lay my brother's case before this benevolent English officer, who, perhaps, might take him off the island, and at the worst restore him to his Maltese prison. My brother had imagined, as the brig approached, that she might be the *Sea Gull*, in which case her commander would be probably that captain whose fortune it had been, the year before, to take him prisoner. As I drew near to the beach, however, I learned that the vessel was not the *Sea Gull*, but the *Dodo*, commanded by Captain Warner.

"You may censure me for my weakness, but so terrible were our necessities, and, through long suffering, my spirit was so broken—I had begun, too, to draw such confidence from the benevolence of this captain—that I resolved to make my appeal even to himself, against himself, surrounded as he was by his enemies and his officers.

"I made my way through the crowd to where he stood (for

he had landed), and approached him. 'Captain,' I said, 'I am here to demand *justice*; justice against yourself, in the presence of these officers; justice on behalf of my brother, Felix Guiscard.'

"The captain understood a little French, though some one of the bystanders translated the words for him, and some conversation ensued between the French prisoner who had acted as interpreter, himself, and his chief officer. The captain's face assumed a frown. 'No, *Monsieur*,' he said to me in bad French, "I can do nothing for him. *Votre frère a cassé sa parole*;" turning his back on me, and proceeding to pay attention to some complaints made by another officer. I retired. My heart in silence devoured this cruel insult. This, then, was the brutal rival who had kidnapped my poor brother. This the man who, when the opportunity for generosity was presented, failed to rise to the height of a partial reparation. I was hustled from his presence by his myrmidons. I walked apart in the midst of a strange plenty. I forgot even to snatch food for Felix in the bitterness of my thoughts,—in my burning desire to be revenged. There was rejoicing on the island. Our soldiers, recovering their gaiety, endeavored to do its honors to their English visitors. They opened the strange theatre, constructed, in a sort of pit, by the ingenuity of some dozen of our prisoners, where comedies were semi-weekly acted during our long tragedy.

"I walked apart; and taking advantage of the preoccupation of my comrades, I went up to the little ruined fort, deserted in the excitement, and succeeded in abstracting a blank leaf from the Breviary of the Spanish priest, who, under the mask of a religious zeal, played the spy upon the island. On this I wrote my defiance of the cruelty of the British commander. I told him that, as heaven would judge hereafter, so man should judge him here. That before heaven and the Holy Cross I vowed that, if ever I escaped from Cabrera, I would bring his baseness home to him in his own land. That henceforth my life was consecrated to his exposure.

"By the time I had finished this document, the English party was reëmbarked. They had been on shore some hours,

It was already afternoon. Two of our officers, one a Colonel, one a Captain of artillery, were to be taken off with them. They were Spanish and not English prisoners. Humanity had stretched the point of justice in *their* favor, while Felix, lawfully an English prisoner, lay dying like a dog upon the arid rocks of this accursed island.

“Our soldiers, in the hope of occasionally bringing down a sea-bird, had (for firearms were very few) constructed bows and arrows, barbed with pointed flint. I borrowed one of these, tied my defiance to the arrow, and with both bow and arrow in my mouth, plunged into the water.

“I neared the vessel. She was getting under weigh; the officer of the deck warned off my approach with meaning gestures and opprobrious words. I held on my course till I was near enough for my arrow to light on board the vessel. I threw myself on my back—in a moment I had fixed it in the bow. Perhaps a devilish suggestion crossed my mind, that my revenge for all our sufferings would be glorious and complete, should my arrow with its missive brain him where he stood. But the sea was rising. The brig gave a lurch from me, and he stood on the poop unharmed. At the same instant the sharp cracking sound of a pistol ball, close to my ear, came past me. I dived, and rose untouched. No doubt he would gladly have buried in the deep, the man who to his dying day will bear testimony to the infamy, which in the end was yet to win him a fortune and a bride.

“When I reappeared upon the surface, I found the Dodo at some distance to leeward, and struck out towards the shore. As I did so the brig backed her sails and rounded to. I could not at first perceive any object for this manœuvre, but it soon appeared that she was lying to, to pick up one of her own boats, which I perceived creeping out of a cove in another part of the island. I swam ashore; took some food for my brother;—I had no need that day of food—and reascended the rocks towards our grotto.

“As I approached, I saw evidences that other persons had been lately there. At the foot of a little rock in which I had cut rude steps, I picked up a clasp-knife, with a dagger blade

of curious construction. On examining it afterwards I found the initial letters, F. G., scratched upon the case. I had heard Felix describe having had such a knife, and I doubted not that this had been part of the property of which he was robbed, on the night when he was put on board the Maltese *speronara*. No arms were permitted; and such a knife as this no man possessed upon the island.

"I mounted to the spot where Felix had been left. Oh! God—why harrow you with this recital? The turf was trampled, and the loose stones that lay about disturbed. Felix lay where I had left him; *murdered*. His dog stood howling above him on a rock. The body was warm, but life extinct.

"No man would listen to my convictions. As I have said, we were not the favorites of our comrades. The solemn earnestness of the Breton character has little in common with the French. We had denied our dog to feed the famishing; these English had brought food, and promised to return with further succor. In our situation the blessing the most felt, was a sufficient meal. They blessed the hand that gave it. They paid no heed to my suspicions. Some thought that Felix had committed suicide; some hinted *I* had killed him. All were so inured to death under circumstances of the utmost horror, that they gave little attention to this mystery. I only found myself and my retreat more shunned than ever. The death of the Corsican was remembered against me, though as I was an officer, under the circumstances of insubordination in which that death took place, it could not fail to have been justified had any investigation been made. Neither was the death of Felix ever looked into. I scraped a grave for him in a cleft of the rock. I promised (for Felix had a pious soul) many masses for his repose. His dog lay on his grave, and howled his requiem.

"There was one corner of the island, to which fishermen from Majorca sometimes resorted in a storm. It was a sheltered cove, in which they hoped to escape observation during their forced stay. It had occurred, and it occurred again during the time our miserable troops continued on the island, that

gaze she strained suddenly into the darkness of the night outside of the conservatory. Her large dark eyes growing, like those of the startled antelope, larger and darker in her fear.

It came!—a sudden thrust against the glass, a sudden overthrow of the geraniums. The crash of glass, and of the falling flower-pots,—a commotion outside of the conservatory. He caught the glare of another pair of eyes on the other side of the glass, and saw a white face pressed against it, suddenly withdrawn. This took but one moment, but in it Amabel had recognised her husband's face and had torn herself away. Col. Guiscard seized her by her drapery.

"Understand? Understand you?" she said chokingly, "I understand you! loose me, sir, loose me. I disbelieve your slanderous tale! For ever out of my sight!"

She flew past him. Guests thronged from the ball-room into the conservatory, and found him standing alone, amidst the fallen leaves and shattered earthenware.

Would you like to know how Amabel was dressed that night? I asked my father, who following in the wake of Captain Warner, was outside the glass at that moment, and had a hurried glance before she fled. He did not see her face; he had a mere confused and passing glimpse of the scene. He says, her dress, as she sprang past, was something white and flowing, whilst something blue and waving seemed to crown her hair. It was a delicate dress of embroidered India muslin, and a species of blue gauze *nubè*, which, in the Maltese *faldetta* fashion, she had wound round her dark hair. Years afterwards I headed a party of young cousins, who rummaged up this finery in an old oak chest upstairs. I put on the gored and yellowish-white India muslin petticoat, all shrunken, limp, and rough-dried. Holding up the skirts well round me, that I might dance and run, and with the blue scarf twisted round my waist, I dashed into the dining-room, and spread consternation by my appearance amongst the grown-up party. Several there could recognise the garments, and the remembrance of the awful night when they were last worn by their mistress, checked in their very throats the roars of laughter

that had at the first moment of our irruption greeted our masquerade. We could not know the cause, but we became aware at once that our frolic was a failure. It seemed to me when grandpapa recovered voice, and we slunk away by a simultaneous understanding to our quarters, that "dressing up," our grand amusement, was to be confined henceforward to the attics or the nursery.

"Grandmamma, have I done wrong?" I sobbed as she came upstairs, and took off my blue scarf and embroidered dress sadly and quietly.

"No, my dear child," she answered, "but to-morrow, I will give you a large chest, and fill it with things fit for you; after which you must never take anything from these trunks, but play with what I put aside for you."

The promise was kept, but amongst the treasures we abandoned, we missed many perquisites. The embroidered muslin petticoat, and scarf, I have never seen again, nor a large collection of black bonnets, once the property of the elder Mrs. Warner.

CHAPTER XV.

Barnave avait retrouvé sa vertu dans sa sensibilité, mais la vertu qui vient tard est comme l'intelligence qui vient après coup, elle ne sert qu' à nous faire mesurer la profondeur de nos fautes.

LAMARTINE. HISTOIRE DES GIRONDINS

As Amabel rushed through the hall, she met her husband coming in through the garden entrance by the conservatory. She recognised him and stopped; stretched out her arms to him, and was about to throw herself upon his breast, exclaiming, "Have you come? Oh! Leonard!"

But he, seizing her left arm by its wrist, hurried her up the staircase.

"Which is your room?" he said between his teeth.

"This. Oh! Leonard!"

He drew her into it, and pulled furiously at the bell-cord, tearing it off, and flinging it on the floor.

She stood bewildered in the centre of the room, holding her wrist, which had been hurt by his rough treatment. Once only she made a sort of movement towards him, clasped her hands and began again, "Oh! Leonard!"

He silenced her by a fierce word. The maid came up.

"You will say downstairs that Mrs. Warner is unwell. You will take care that no one comes up here to-night; she is too ill to be disturbed."

The woman looked at her mistress; and went downstairs to report in the servants' hall the progress of the quarrel.

"Oh! Leonard," said his wife, trying again to cling to him. "I am so glad you have come. Take me away with you. Save me. Forgive me. Take pity on me, Leonard."

He thrust her off, and taking the key from the lock, opened the door.

"If you have any remaining respect for your reputation," he said, "you will make no noise this night, nor attempt to release yourself from this room. There will be eyes upon you."

So saying he passed out and locked the door. The moment he was gone her presence of mind came back to her. She fell upon her knees before the door. She implored him to come back. "One moment—only one moment . . . one little moment, dear, dear, dearest Leonard!"

There was no voice, nor any that answered her. Only confused sounds of gaiety in the ball-room below.

Pressing her head against her hands, and listening intently, she had remained an hour probably, without the power of connecting thought, when she heard quick, heavy steps coming up the oaken stairs.

She hoped that it was Leonard coming up to release her, to tell her that his anger was all past, to hear her heart poured out in comforting confession, and to take her to his arms; and she rose up from where she knelt and stood aside, making space for the sudden opening of the door. But the steps passed by her chamber. She listened and heard voices. Men were in the

gallery. One of them wore spurs. He was an officer from the garrison of C—— Castle. The other voice was young, and rich, and sweet. It was the first time she had heard it, and the time arrived when it became to her one of those dear familiar voices, whose echoes make a plaintive music in the heart, when we recall them as we wander in night watches, seeking our lost, best loved, most loving ones, amongst those shadows that people with pale forms the land of dreams. Their talk was now distinct, yet low, of fighting, murder, and of sudden death.

They spoke of a meeting on the morrow, and she knew it was between Col. Guiscard and her husband. They arranged the preliminaries, they spoke of it as inevitable. From things they said, she learned that the Colonel had met her husband in the hall as he went down stairs, and offered him satisfaction. *Satisfaction!* The word implied a wrong, as the pale listener, with scalding tears of rage, and with hot shame upon her cheeks, felt; and the seconds both acknowledged.

And they discussed her too. The military man said, "Hang it, the sex is always at the bottom of men's difficulties and troubles."

The other voice said sadly, "That the life of Captain Warner was of value to his country, pity it should thus be put to hazard for a good-for-nothing woman."

The military man then asked, "if Captain Warner had been an unkind or inattentive husband?"

And the voice answered, "No. That he had married his wife for love, and was devotedly attached to her."

And then they said how much—much better it had been had he married some young English wife, instead of making an eccentric choice amongst foreign women.

She heard them going down stairs, and as the sound of their steps diminished as they went, it seemed as if the dumb, deaf spirit that possessed her heart had passed away. It passed as she fell down upon her knees, hid her fair young face once more in her hands, and, lifting up her voice as she realized her grief, from the depths of her young heart arose a low but most exceeding bitter cry.

Who can picture to himself the feelings with which the

aching heart of our first mother heard the closing of the gates of her loved garden? Yet Eve had still her Adam—the promise of the Father was in her heart; and, looking back with tearful eyes, she beheld comfort. One of the brightest of the heavenly host had passed the flaming portals. The angel of hope, folding his shining wings, trod in her painful path, his soft smile sank into her heart, and, lifting up her voice with that of Adam, they praised and magnified the holy name of God.

The hardest part of the punishment of the mother of all living Amabel Warner knew she had to bear. Her sins would be visited beyond the limits of her life upon a future generation.

As one after another of her early hopes rushed past her, in the tumult of her thoughts upon that dreadful night, floating like drift wood to the dreary land where memory flings the wrecks of things we have forgotten, she knew for the first time in her married life how abundant had been the materials given her for happiness, how hopeless was the wreck, and how complete the ruin.

And was her fault to kill him? Was her disgrace to be blotted out only in his blood?

"Oh! Leonard," she cried in agony of spirit, "believe me, I despise him. Indeed, I shrink from him. I never did anything but shrink from him. I see his art. I know his purposes. I disbelieve it all!"

Love has its highest exercise when it can rest its faith in doubtful circumstances upon the character it knows, rather than upon the circumstances themselves.

Through her mind passed the remembrance of the childish plans so lately formed. Had they been carried out, . . . but they would *not* have been carried out, the threat of Col. Guiscard's protection on her journey, had awakened and alarmed her, . . . but had he not discovered her design, had her husband not come back, had she not been locked into her chamber, she would have been at that hour, as we have said, travelling alone, clandestinely, by night, to the southern coast, there to take passage in the first ship that sailed for the Mediterranean, where

throwing herself on the protection of her early friends in Malta, she hoped to have dictated terms either of separation or of reconciliation to her husband; exacting as the price of her return, the redress of all her grievances, and entire emancipation from the control of Mrs. Warner.

At the height of her folly, her feelings had been suddenly reversed by the prospect of danger to her husband,—by the thought that he once loved her, but that, till too late, she had never set a sufficient value on his love; and now, instead of her deserting him triumphantly, as it were, and under the protection of the friends who loved her best, dictating the terms of her return, he was about to cast her off for ever, disgraced, degraded, ruined, and undone.

Some old lines that had fallen in her way, in the course of her last year's miscellaneous reading, haunted her memory.

Ruin ensues, reproach, and endless shame,
And one false step for ever blasts her name,
In vain with tears her loss she may deplore,
In vain look back to what she was before,
She sets like stars that fall to rise no more.

Troubles of the imagination vanished. She only felt the actualities of her position. She knew, and knew too late, that it had been in her power to be happy. Her heart was turned against him who had troubled the prospects of her life. Had Felix then himself appeared before her, he would have found himself her dread, and almost her aversion. Her anxiety for the fate of Capt. Warner had awakened all her interest in his character, and with it love.

Woe to those who cannot see their fault until the consequences of their own sin leave them no hope of escape. Memory and conscience are the parents of remorse. One by one, the remembrance of every scene of her married life passed through her memory, and inexorable conscience pointed the same moral to each. "I might—I ought—it was in my power to have been happy."

No thoughts of an earlier period disturbed her recollections of her later life. As I have seen in that strange, wild, heath

country, where she subsequently resided, the heathery hills melt into mist in certain conditions of the atmosphere, leaving the foreground of the landscape clear, bright, distinct, and more extended than before, so the days of her girlhood passed beyond her sight; the links of imagination that still bound her to the past snapped suddenly asunder; and thenceforth the tale of her early love, her early years, became as indifferent to her as the sorrows or the pleasures of her infancy. She felt that she had long ceased to love Felix, and that the late emotions she had experienced, through the arts of Col. Guiscard, were mere galvanic stirrings of the corpse of love.

One by one her memory renewed the scenes of her married life; again she felt herself alone, oppressed and desolate in her mother's family. Again she felt the brightening influences of Captain Warner's presence. She saw his looks of admiration in the I—— hall-room, upon that most exciting night when he renewed his addresses to her. Again he was driving her out in the fresh air, on the first day of her release after her long illness; his genial temperament and careful love were more reviving than the breath of summer. She saw him, when her husband, the favorite of society, and felt that with the value that he set on social qualifications she must have deeply disappointed him. She had been at no pains to conceal her incapacity for the duties he most valued, and her distaste for the neighboring society. Her dislike to old Mrs. Warner had induced her to withdraw more and more from the invaded sphere of her own duties; instead of justifying her husband's choice amongst his associates, she had despised their good opinion. Her heart now told her how deeply she must have hurt herself in the estimation of a husband susceptible to a fault to outward impressions; and a spasm of jealousy passed through her heart as she recalled his attentions to Miss O'Byrne.

"How manly, how handsome he is!" said her heart. "How gay, how bright, how easily contented!"

She learned upon that night that love is to be won by adapting ourselves to the nature we desire to impress. Some women eloquently reclaim the love denied to them. They

parade their devotion and their unrequited virtues, and the world wonders at the insensibility of the brute upon whose heart the warmth and justice of such passionate appeals produce no impression. And the reason is that all this eloquence is not in sympathy with his nature. One hour of looking beautiful, one act insinuating devotion, one tribute won from public opinion to a husband's taste, would, in the case of such a man as Captain Warner, have done more than volumes of appeal to confirm a wavering affection.

I do not say that this should be. Perhaps all men ought to be of a poetic temperament, all endowed with the sensibilities of our own sex, in addition to the masculine qualities for which we love them. But, we must take them as they come, and submit to be valued by our husband's standard, even though this rule excludes some of our noblest qualities, and demands the cultivation of gifts which nature has sparingly bestowed. I wonder how much Captain Warner would have been touched by the letters of F—— K——, addressed to himself, or those of the Duchesse de Praslin? Though he was quite the sort of man to yield them a kind of chivalrous admiration when they appeared in the public journals.

And must *he die*? This was the *refrain* of her thoughts. And must *he die*? The moment that the tumult of her spirit lulled, conscience presented her that thought. If he should die? In agony of supplication she prayed at intervals, through the long night, that her husband might be spared to her, that the clouds and thick darkness that now shrouded their married life might be rolled back; that they might yet be happy. She meant, be happy on the morrow. And the watchful angel, who carried up the prayer and laid it in the golden censer before the sapphire throne, forbore to trouble her expectation. He knew that sudden grief rarely sees into the future. He knew that the utmost certainty of future alleviation will never ease one throb of present acute suffering.

By three o'clock, the last carriages drove off. The tired inmates of the house came languidly one by one up the oak stairs to bed. She heard each footstep, and marked each closing door.

But there was one step she listened for, which did not come. Col. Guiscard, however, had passed into his chamber, and that thought reassured her. She dreaded to make any disturbance in the house for fear of her husband's displeasure, but, at all risks to herself, she was resolved to prevent the duel.

Ah! how many times that night did her active imagination picture him in some unheard of peril! The duel was taking place, and she, rushing into his arms, received in her own breast the bullet of his adversary, and died his saving angel. Or, startled by loud cries of fire from below, with superhuman strength she burst the door. She found him. She was aiding him, guiding him, saving him. The strong man had lost his strength, and to the power of her love was like a little child. Death glared on them in many shapes, with glowing fiery eyes. Licking his red lips with his forked tongue, he stretched it out one moment to devour them. The next a burning beam fell on their path. A mangled fate was at their option. The fire neared them. There was no escape. A sense of suffocation oppressed them for one moment. Then all suffering was over, and a sort of languid happiness pervaded her whole being, as she felt herself folded in her husband's arms, and looked up dying in his face, to read there his forgiveness and his love.

At last she heard him coming slowly up the staircase. She heard his hand laid lightly on the lock. She scarcely breathed. The moment was coming, . . . had come, when she was to be allowed to approach him with explanation and entreaty, and she trembled. Her mind had vividly before it the thought, that instead of love, honor, and obedience, she had brought public scandal into his house, and she recalled with shame and pity the agony of expression she had last seen upon the face of old Mrs. Warner.

But the hand was lifted, and the step moved on. Then, in her agony, she flung her strength against the door, and called him. The softer thoughts that had been stirring in his heart when he had fancied her asleep, and longed to look upon her face once more, passed away at this exhibition of her violence; perhaps he took even a sullen pleasure in the impotence of her passion, and he went on his way along the corridor, unmoved

by the loud weeping which she had now no inclination to restrain.

When this somewhat subsided, she walked, in her excitement, round and round her prison, with her arms close pressed over her throbbing heart. She walked to the window, through which the mocking moon was pouring floods of its cold, calm, pale light upon her floor. She flung up the sash softly, and sprang, without difficulty, upon the balcony formed by the roof of the great colonnade. Her idea had been to descend by some of the tin spouting, but this a glance told her was impossible. She ran backwards and forwards on the balcony. She intended, could she get down, to ring the bell of the hall door, to rouse the house, to make her appeal to Mr. Rustmere; at any possible peril to herself, to put a stop to the projected duel. She tried one or two of the other windows that looked out upon the balcony. They belonged to the large spare chamber, and were fast. Only the three guest chambers were in that part of the building. This one was empty; besides which there was her own room and that of Col. Guiscard.

Oh! Heaven! there was the gleam of a light in his room through the closed blinds. She fancied she saw within a moving shadow. Her terror misled her when she was sure she heard him stepping out, roused by the noise of her footsteps on the balcony. Anything—everything was better than that he should find her there.

At the further end of the colonnade, along the wall of the house, there was a painted trellis, with roses, and the flowering pomegranate, and the light clustering clematis (barely budding at this season) trained up against it to the second floor. In her terror, she climbed over the low balustrade of the balcony, and trusted her weight to its support. Her delicate hands were lacerated by the thorns and nails as she descended, stepping carefully from diamond to diamond in the trellis-work, but she took no heed of bodily pain. When more than half way down she heard a crack. The fastenings of the trellis-work were parting a foot or so above her. She hurried, threw her weight less carefully. Her foot became entangled; she struggled to disengage it; the light wood-work, already cracked,

gave way, and she fell to the ground having twisted her ankle. It was not a very severe fall, the shock being broken by the soft mould of the garden, and only her face struck upon the gravel. But the pain of her ankle was intense, and nothing but a determined courage of endurance, awakened by her fears of Col. Guiscard, prevented her loud screams. She heard a dog bark in the stables. She was conscious of effort and of agony; and then she fainted. She fainted, lying alone in the cold, calm, spring moonlight, with her poor disfigured face lying cut upon the gravel, and the wrecks of the buds and flowers she had blighted, showered around her upon the cold, damp ground.

CHAPTER XVI.

That was wrong perhaps,—but then
Such things be—and will again!
Women cannot judge for men.

MRS. BROWNING.—BERTHA IN THE LANE.

Lovers who have parted
In hate, whose mining depths so intervene
That they can meet no more, though broken-hearted.

BYRON.—CHILDE HAROLD.

For nearly two hours she lay on the cold breast of that great mother, into whose womb each man must enter a second time to be born into eternity. In the most trying hours of her after years, when clouds and thick darkness narrowed the horizon of her life, till present misery appeared her only portion, she never weakly wished that, in this hour, a premature death had cut short all her sorrows. Our church, she felt, has wisely put into our lips, without distinction, her thanksgiving for our "creation and preservation," amongst "the blessings of this life." Existence is a blessing so long as we can animate its pulses by the double hope of praising God in weakness, and of aiding, even by a mere patient endurance of our lot, the cause of sad and suffering humanity.

When she opened her faint eyes, they met at their first glance the morning sun, just rising over the low line of Suffolk hills, dim in the eastward. For half a moment, she lay watching its red and rayless disk as it rose, majestically slow, over the horizon. The recovery of consciousness is always the same process as that of the first consciousness of infancy. A complacent contemplation of external objects precedes in both cases the power of reflection.

After watching the sun for a few moments, she remembered all that had occurred. She recollected that she was there to prevent the sacrifice of her husband, and that the hour of the meeting might have passed while she lay insensible upon the ground. Notwithstanding the great pain she suffered, not only in her ankle, but in all her limbs, she managed to struggle to her feet, and leaning against one of the pillars of the colonnade, she looked around her. The sun had risen upon the earth; but there was no sign that any of the earth's inhabitants had risen too. As she looked round, however, a garden gate was opened near the stables, and a boy in his smock made his appearance with a milk-pail. He was going in a contrary direction, and would not have noticed the white figure leaning for support against the white pillar, had not Amabel found strength and voice to call him loudly.

"Is any person stirring?" she asked him.

"They're gettin' a carriage ready at the stables," was the answer; "and some of the gentlemen is up. I see four on 'em goin' out a quarter an 'our ago by the back door."

"Do you know where they went?" cried Amabel.

"No, I doan't," said the boy. "I thought they was a goin' down by the West Meadow. They went that way, all four."

"Oh! pull that bell—pull it hard," cried Amabel. "Yet, no—stay," she added, remembering that it was loss of time, in such a crisis, to wake up Mr. Rustmere. "Run after them, my boy. If you overtake them before they fight, you shall have a piece of gold. Tell Captain Warner, I implore him not to fight—that he is under a mistake—that I will explain everything. Beg him to come to me."

The boy set out at full speed, animated by the double pros-

pect of an excitement and a guinea. Amabel, unable to remain waiting in suspense the result of her embassy, resolved to be a witness of what passed. She dragged herself across the lawn,—each painful step brushing the rime frost from the grass,—towards a small eminence commanding a panoramic view of the neighborhood, on which was built a sort of circular summer-house or temple, called by its originator a belvedere. When she had reached this spot and cast her eyes around, she saw, nearly a quarter of a mile below, in the West Meadow, the group she was in search of. To the right, her little messenger was running very fast, and making signals; but it was evident he would not reach the spot till all was over. The ground was measured, and the parties with their weapons were in the act of taking aim. They were too far off to be distinguished from one another; but she saw the flash and heard the shot. Forgetting her own wounds, she started to run down the hill; but her ankle gave way under her, and she was compelled to sit down on the damp grass and await the issue.

Oh! how she prayed in very agony of supplication, as if prayer could even then reverse the decree that had gone forth, and had been executed, that our Father in Heaven would spare her husband!

At length one man disengaged himself from the group, and making a straight course for the house, came directly towards her. As he approached the Belvedere, the sun glanced on the gold lace of his undress uniform, and she saw it was her husband.

She waved her hands to him. She called to him. I don't think that at first all this attracted his attention, otherwise he might have turned aside to avoid her. As it was, he almost came upon her unawares, and stopped breathless.

"Leonard!"

She made an effort to rise and throw herself upon his breast, but it was unsuccessful. She fell at his feet. Fear, and thankfulness, and pain, and agitation choked her voice, but she gasped out: "I thank God you are safe. I prayed you might be safe."

"That's *his* blood," said Captain Warner, fiercely agitated.

"That is his blood," displaying his hands, "and mine," holding out his left arm. "You may be proud of your work. You have been the death of one man and the dishonor of another. Do you hear me, Madam?" he continued, taking hold of her; "do you know that you have been my ruin? Do you know that I am a deserter from my ship—from my post in time of danger? Do you know," he continued, raising his voice, "that I shall be tried for this by a court-martial, and be shot, Madam?"

"Listen, Leonard. Forgive me if you can," she faintly faltered.

He pushed her back.

"Leonard!"—she clasped her arms tight round his knees—her white arms glancing bare in the bright morning sunlight—"hear me, not for my own sake, Leonard, but for *our child*! The child that I shall bear you, dearest Leonard!"

He broke from her with an oath.

"By the heaven that's above us," he exclaimed, "name no child of yours to me. I'll not acknowledge it. No court of justice upon earth could force me to acknowledge it. I disown it—I disown you. Swear! swear!" he cried, growing more and more excited, as unconsciously, perhaps, he presented the pistol he held in his right hand at her head, "swear that if I spare you and myself the scandal of a public separation, you will never proclaim you are my wife—that you will hide yourself far, far away, where no one knows my misery. Swear that your child shall never bear the name of Warner. Swear quickly. Swear—"

"Oh God! Oh Leonard!"

She bowed her poor young head, and fainted at his feet.

Then for the first time he remarked her dress, and saw the bleeding wounds upon her face and hands. The Captain's heart melted at the sight of physical suffering in a woman. Her present condition, as she lay, pale, broken, helpless, on the earth, seemed a sort of earnest in his eyes of her future fate. He vowed in his heart to place her so far above want as to be beyond temptation.

He took up her light girlish form in his strong arms. Once more her heart beat against his heart. This once more her

husband's arms were shielding her from evil. He carried her up to the Belvedere as tenderly and as carefully as if she had still been the bride of his love. Laying her down upon the floor, he pillowed her drooping head upon his wounded arm, and then remarked how thin and insufficient was her dress, and how thickly hung the damp drops in her hair and drapery. His camlet cloak was on his arm—needed, indeed, to conceal his uniform in travelling. Without concealment, he would fearfully increase the risk of evidence against him, should he be called to answer for his life on a court-martial. But he wrapped it tenderly around her, laid its folds so as to secure her from the cold, and its cape to be her pillow, and then before he left her—they were alone—before he left, and gave her up for ever, he—

Have you never crept at midnight to the bedside of your dearest one, when the sun has gone down on wrath between you, and pride, policy, or temper have denied her the manifestation of returning tenderness,—have you never crept, I ask, to her bedside as she slept, and with soft kisses eased your heart of its bitterness, since all the time she could not know how wakeful and how watchful and undying was your love?

Even so, though Captain Warner hated himself half an hour later for the impulse, he bent over her young face as she lay unconscious, and with his warm lips pressed upon her pale and icy ones, gave her one long, last, agonized embrace before he left her.

CHAPTER XVII.

Elle n'aime plus rien ; elle ne veut plus rien aimer. Son enfance a passé comme vont passer ces belles fleurs ; sa jeunesse s'est évanouie comme s'en ira bientôt le parfum du lis—la fleur des rois de France. Plus rien n'est resté dans le cœur de cette femme que les regrets du passé. En même temps, la croyance n'est pas encore venue ; la pauvre malade n'a pas pu se résigner à prier Dieu en toute humilité d'esprit et de cœur.—*L'Américain à Paris.*

WHEN next her eyes unclosed, and she was conscious of any of the objects round her, they rested on an irregular join in the

blue and white checked curtains of the tent bed on which she found herself. After lying a few moments helplessly wondering at the needless irregularity, she raised herself and looked around.

She was in the low room of a farm-house, with a large beam traversing the ceiling, a roughly boarded floor spread with some neat pieces of carpet, some wooden chairs, an old-fashioned chest of mahogany drawers, radiantly polished, and an eight-day clock, with a large round face, heavily ticking to the lazy movement of its weights and pendulum. She sank back in bed, exhausted with the exertion, and lay quiet, watching the movement of the clock, free from pain, or any sense of care, feeling languidly at ease and happy.

Presently she heard voices in the room next to her. One seemed to her like the voice of her step-father, Captain Talbot, but she was too weak to disturb her mind by any speculation as to why he was there.

"He certainly has behaved most handsomely. In no case could he possibly have done more for her; and under the circumstances not one man in a thousand would have made such sacrifices to provide for his wife. Captain Warner is not rich. Till his mother's death he has little beyond his pay, or half-pay, to depend on, and he gives up all her fortune. The interest of £12,000 makes a difference in a man's income. It is a most handsome; and liberal, and generous provision for her."

"Yes, indeed," said Captain Talbot; "Warner is a fine fellow, and from my heart I pity him. He is a man who would be particularly cut up by anything of this kind. When they married, the match was going to be a very happy thing, I thought. He was uncommonly fond of her and proud of her."

"And she of him?"

"Well, no: she did very well. I suppose she might have been more so."

"Twelve thousand pounds is six hundred a year," said the other party.

"Oh, more than that, a great deal more, my good sir," cried Captain Talbot. "I shall get, as her trustee, at least five and a half to six per cent. for it. The money is entirely her own."

He has settled it upon her, principal and interest, to spend, or to save, or to will to her relations."

"Very handsome, indeed, Captain," said the other.

"Here is his letter to me," said Captain Talbot. "Nothing can be more decisive as to the disposition of her fortune. I am really sorry for his position. It is a mere letter of business; no reproaches to her. But you see by it, Mr. Trevor, he gives her up entirely."

After a pause, the other said: "A very good letter. The letter of a merciful man, Captain. Where will she reside, sir?"

"Well, I would have been willing to take her home to us, poor thing," said Captain Talbot; "but my wife says not. You know how women view these things; and we have daughters growing up."

"Ah, yes, I understand. How is her ladyship, sir?"

"She has been ailing, and this thing seems to have broken her down. It is not expedient, I think, that she should see her daughter. Lady Karnac is a woman of strong feelings, and she might say more to the poor girl than she could bear. Women don't make allowance in these things for the arts and insinuations of the other party."

"Very true, sir, you say true," replied Trevor, who was an attorney from C——. And then they proceeded to talk law. Every word that they had said, Amabel's memory laid up in her heart, though at present she was so weak that by a merciful provision of nature they were not able to move her. Pride and affection, anger and remorse, sat at her heart and waited for an entrance. Admitted, they would rend and tear it in their conflict; but at present they joined hands and sat waiting at the door.

A gentle sleep stole over her. It was one of those warm, bright, genial days that come by twos and threes during the month of April. She was scarcely yet sufficiently recalled to life, to be conscious of its burthens. When she awoke, an elderly woman in a dark stuff gown, was standing in the open doorway, watching the simmering of some concoction in a saucepan, and talking at the same time to persons in the next room, who appeared to be dining.

"How is she to-day, wife?" said a rough voice with a strong rustic accent, but in kindly tones.

"Well, master, she is getting along purely. She hasn't got no fever left on her." (Here the farmer's wife came up to the bed and passed her hand over her breast, to feel her.) "But such a fever as she 've had, takes a sight of time for a body to get over. Most especial, as the Doctor says, when she's got so much upon her mind, together too with her poor ankle."

"Well, wife, no one can say you hav'n't done *your* duty by her," rejoined the farmer. "My missus," he added, "has tended that poor thing as if she had been her own flesh and blood. She couldn't have done more by her. She 've sat up with her every half the night t' month that she have been here. I say that, however had any poor creetur has been, when it comes to a case of sickness, that's no more than what we're bound for. I don't respect my lady at the hall, . . . my lady Harriet, for being too good to take in a poor sinner. But that, to be sure, is not anything that concerns me. That is not our affair. We've got to do our own duty in this life, and let other folks' duty alone."

"Oh! I never was so scared, I think, in all my life," said a dairy maid, "as when I saw them bringing along those two, like bloody corpses just for all the world."

"And poor dear," said the farmer's wife, "to hear her going on raving about deaths, and fires, and bloody wounds. And taking me now for one person, and now for another. And talking in all sorts of tongues, poor dear. I'm sure I never thought she would have got over it. And begging me, and praying me to let her speak to her husband. If he had been here hisself, I'm sure he'd have took pity on her, for they say, he was a worthy man, and always a good husband. And then, she'd get so violent," she continued, proceeding in her reminiscences, "till it took all the strength of me and my good man, to hold her, and put her back into her bed. And there she'd lay and moan, . . . oh! *such* moans! till another fit came on her."

"Did she ever talk about that other chap?" said the farmer

"Well, she talked a heap about them all. Which was

which I don't know, master. I never should go, of course, to name him to her."

"I shall," said one dairymaid to another, as they went together past the window. "I long to tell her that her sweet-heart wasn't killed. When she gets better she might take on about him, you know."

"Where is he?" said the other girl.

"Oh! Jim says he's at C——, up at the Castle. They took him there when he got better. And, because he's a Frenchy, he's a what-d'ye-call—a *detenu*."

This was all that Amabel ever knew of what had passed during her illness. Such conversations were never renewed again in her hearing. The dairymaid, finding her on her recovery quite a different person to what her imagination had depicted, had never courage to speak to her; and the only other circumstance she learned by chance, was from Jim, the milk boy, to whom she paid the guinea she had promised, who said that Captain Warner had paid him and Tom Harris handsomely to send help to her, as she lay in the Belvedere.

That Lady Harriet had refused to receive her in her hour of distress; that all the county believed Ferdinand her lover; that he was not dead (for which she thanked God for her husband's sake) and that Lady Harriet, having sent her to the farm, she had been taken in, and tenderly nursed by these good strangers, was enough. She cared to know no more, and made no further inquiries.

And now she opened her beseeching, piteous eyes, as the farmer's wife came near to beat and freshen up the pillows. She smiled a weak, faint smile, and put her thin hand out of bed.

"Too kind—too good," were the only words she could make audible.

"There—there, you must be still and don't speak. I am sure you are quite welcome to anything we've done for you," said the farmer's wife, throwing a little severity into her voice, for virtue's sake, smoothing the bed-clothes gently over her at the same time, and going to the fire to stir anew her gruel.

"Get out, dog, do," she said, impatiently, to a little intruder who ventured through the door-way. Amabel, who was watching all that passed, said, "Put him out. Don't let him come near me."

But the little thing, before the farmer's wife could catch him in her arms, made a spring upon the bed, dragged himself close to his sick mistress, and, with a low whine, laid his cold nose to her cheek. As she turned her eyes on him he seemed to know that at last she recognised him, for, wagging his tail joyfully, he began to lick her face and hands.

"Yes," said the farmer's wife, "he has done so all the time, ma'am. Sometimes you did not mind him, and sometimes you would shriek if he came near you. But we hav'nt been able to keep the poor beast out of here. He took on so bad when some of the men tied him, that my old man fancied it seemed cruel, so I have kept his coat clean and sweet that he might not soil the sheets. He is seldom long away from you."

"Let him stay, poor dog," said Amabel. "My poor, dear *Barba!* My one true friend." She threw her arms over his back, she laid her face against his snowy coat, and he pressed his against her bosom. Large quiet tears fell slowly from her eyes, and now she felt her desolation. Cast off, wretched, and degraded; guilty in the eyes of the world and in her own, she felt the shame of her position. Her husband's generosity barbed the arrows of humiliation. There was a dawning desire that she might yet prove less unworthy than he thought her, and love was reawakened for the unattainable.

For the next week or two, she could only keep awake a few hours at a time, and was amused by almost any moving object round her. The farmer's wife slept in her room at night, and, during the day, was attentive to all her wants and wishes; but as her patient became better she found time for other things, and, as she went about her business, Amabel, lying on the tent-bed, under the blue check curtains, or sitting up in a cumbrous sick chair beside the fire, imbibed innumerable ideas of domestic economy, and gained an insight into English life, which years of mere drawing-room intercourse never would have given her. She saw no person save the farm-people, except Captain Talbot,

who came over twice or thrice to see her, and showed her, at her own request, her husband's letter, which, while it spoke of his safe return to the Magician; which, delayed by contrary winds for two days at Spithead, had saved his being called to answer for his desertion, completely overcame her. Captain Talbot wanted to converse about her affairs, but she assured him she was not capable of anything of that sort, and inquired, impatiently, if he could not manage all her business for her.

"Not without a power of attorney," he replied.

"Oh! get as many attorneys as you please," was her answer.

So the Captain brought her, the next time he came, a parchment, which she signed without looking over, her hand trembling as she wrote her name, "Amabel Warner."

"I shall give up that name," she said to her step-father, pointing to it with her pen.

"Nonsense, my dear," he said, crossly. "A divorce itself would not compel you to that."

"I shall give it up," she said, with quivering lips. "It was the only stipulation he made with me. Obedience upon this point is the only way left me to give him pleasure now."

As she grew better and gained strength to read, her host, the farmer, brought her all his library. The books she liked the best were one descriptive of his wife's native village, *The Complete Angler*, and *The Life of Fuller*, also by Isaac Walton. Rural pleasures were to her a new, or rather a revived idea, and happiness in religious practices was so also.

The parish had been a college living, and its present incumbent was a bachelor. He was a man of learning, and a good man; but at all times shy; and to have presented himself at the bedside of an erring woman (one more especially who had moved in the upper ranks of life before she fell), to preach repentance and amendment and remission of sins, was an idea which had never disturbed his sluggish imagination. He would have come of course had he been sent for, but sending for a clergyman would as little have entered into Amabel Warner's mind.

As she became familiar with the habits of thought of the

people about her, she was amazed at their capabilities of grumbling. Dissatisfaction is elevated into a virtue very frequently in England. There is a piety that demands its constant exercise; there is a gentility that builds itself upon it; and above all, there is a sort of loyalty to early associations which makes a grumbling current throughout after life, the token of a loving remembrance of the past, amongst the English poor.

Mrs. Dryden was not a native of the Eastern Counties. She had been born in a small, secluded, very rural village, on the edge of that great heath country, pretty equally distributed between the counties of Hampsbire, Sussex, and Surrey. She had, after her marriage, been brought thence by a brother of Mr. Rustmere, who, being privileged to shoot one season over the Royal Forest, had heard Farmer Dryden recommended as a good head-man upon a property, and had tempted him to settle upon his brother's estate in the Eastern Counties. Love to her native village was like a hinge to every one of Mrs. Dryden's thoughts. Whatever she said or did turned thereupon. If she made a drop of gruel, or a cooling drink for Amabel, she had a word to say about the water, comparing its qualities (unquestionably superior in the wash-tub) with the more limpid freshness of her native springs. Coal smoke was the hourly theme of her discourse, and her abomination. She traced to its influence every malady that afflicts the human frame. The smell of a fire of peat Amabel began to imagine from her description must be as fragrant as pastilles. Forty times a day she railed against the prevalence of agues, "unknown," as she said truly, "in the parts I come from." Any person, without prejudice, equally acquainted with both districts, would certainly not give to Mrs. Dryden's native soil an agricultural preference over the Eastern Counties; but she constantly described it to her visitor as a land flowing with milk and honey, a land of flocks and herds, and turf, and bees, and venison. The poor had no privileges in Essex, she declared. No turf land, no commons, no hop-picking (that second harvest in September, when all that the women make by hopping, is their own by long established right, and helps

to furnish their families with winter clothing). Amabel, convalescent and quiescent, heard the stories of her native place with pleasure; and in the evening, when the work of the family was over, she would coax Mrs. Dryden to sit down by the fire in her room (which she did with her hands spread out upon her lap) and gossip by the hour. Amabel was like a child who hears and loves strange stories, and an interest in the life of the peasantry in England was something entirely new to her. She listened with pleasure to descriptions of the villagers, to anecdotes of the old Vicar who knew so well the events and history of the people in his parish, that he seemed by magic to come forward with the right help at the right moment in their hour of trouble. He it was who, when Mrs. Dryden left her parish, gave her the Bible that she read out of on Sundays, and laid his hand upon her head in solemn sacerdotal blessing. Then followed a description of his son, the present Vicar, who had succeeded his father since she came away. Mrs. Dryden had lived as servant in the house before she married, and "we didn't use to do so in the Vicar's family," was her phrase of condemnation.

Mrs. Dryden loved to have a listener; Amabel's station in life perhaps added to her value, and as the good woman sat talking of the days of her unmarried life, and of the home and interests of her childhood, she half forgot the sinner in the lady. Amabel grew familiar with the localities of that district. She heard traditions of great snow storms in the forest; stories of the echoes that abound there; stories of Mrs. Dryden's father's farm, of the big dog Smoker, and his prowess; stories of the wych elm whose leaves charmed formerly all manner of disease amongst the cattle, and of the big old oak around whose trunk the ancients of the village had their seat, while lads and lasses frolicked on the green.

Sometimes, though rarely—for Mrs. Dryden never was quite easy upon these occasions, and was less friendly to her patient after them—the farmer, by permission, came himself into her room, and emptied his short pipe beside her fire. He was something of a reader, but had never before been thrown into familiar intercourse with a more cultivated mind. All literary

fancies he had hitherto had to himself in his own circle, and the pain of isolation in any pursuit diminishes its pleasures. And now as he talked over with his guest his favorite books which he had lent her, the warmth of the pleasure he took in them was never chilled by coming into contact with colder feelings than his own. As another man has said in the same case, "I received an additional warmth of delight from her glowing admiration."

No person ever had more of this beautiful intuition of sympathy than Amabel. I remember my father once applying to her this passage which Emerson has credited to a Persian poet:

"For though the bias of her nature was to sympathy not thought, yet was she so perfect in her own nature, as to meet intellectual persons by the fulness of her heart, warming them by her sentiments, believing as she did that by dealing nobly with all, all would show themselves noble."

Farmer Dryden would grow almost eloquent on these occasions, and as he felt his powers of mind drawn out under the influence of her sympathy, he came to enjoy these intellectual hours so much that one is not surprised at Mrs. Dryden's uneasy remembrance at those times of the moral humiliation of her guest's position, and at her always attempting to direct the conversation into channels more interesting and comprehensible to herself, such as descriptions of the deer-stalking carried on within the memory of man in the King's Forest, and a story which Farmer Dryden had inherited from his grandfather, of how the Red Déer of Wolmer paid their court before Queen Anne.

A more healthful stimulant for her mind than such intercourse at this period could not have been offered her. For two years all her interests in life had been grouped about herself. Life had become too much individualized. As one says, "Our individual life must be tempered in the common elements of universal life. In isolation our own weakness becomes painful."

It was a bright and beautiful Sunday. The whole earth was perfumed with Spring odors,—the scent of the apple-blossoms

came in gusts from the green orchard, and the lilac and syringa bushes made a pleasant fragrance round the farmer's door, when, during the hours of morning service, Amabel took her first walk in the open air.

By all her nerves, through all her pores, she seemed to imbibe new life, new health, and a fresh sense of beauty. She lingered in the garden amongst the sweet thyme and the rosemary, the opening bed of stocks, and the syringa bushes. She ventured beyond the gate; the singing of the congregation, borne on the soft air towards her, mingled harmoniously with nature's scents and sounds. Suddenly, she became aware that the congregation was dismissed, and she knew herself too feeble to get back to the farm before a dozen or more persons must pass her. She made what haste she could, and was just concealed behind the lime hedge, when Lady Harriet came by. As she passed the farm-gate, Amabel heard her speak to Mrs. Dryden. "When does she talk of going?" were the words that met her ear.

When does she talk of going? And whither?—whither, alas! should she go?

It was not the first time that this question had presented itself for consideration; but now it seemed to press for a decision, and the remainder of the day she spent almost entirely alone, leaning back in her sick chair in painful meditation. Mrs. Dryden attributed this stillness to fatigue, and was not surprised to find her languid the next morning. An hour or two later, when she came again into the chamber, Amabel was still in bed; and, on her lifting up her face, Mrs. Dryden saw she had been crying. She came up to her, and found the pillows and her handkerchief soaked in tears.

"Now, don't 'e, now, there is a good lady," she began. "If you take on so"

But her patient interrupted her, by taking hold of her hand.

"Dear, kind, good Mrs. Dryden!" Raising herself in bed, she burst into tears again and proceeded. "Dear Mrs. Dryden, I have been bad enough, and done wrong enough, Heaven knows; but I cannot bear that you should think me, as you do, a hundred times more wicked than I am. For the sake of

what is right, I ought not to let you think worse than need be of my conduct, though, at first, when I got better, life seemed to me a gift so hard to take back thankfully, that I did not care what you thought, or what anybody thought of me. Oh! Mrs. Dryden," she went on, "I have not been a good wife to a husband who deserved a better woman. I married him without appreciating him, and I have never, till very lately, known his value. When his honor and his reputation were assailed, I did not shield them. When his happiness was in my hands I cared not for the keeping. I never sought to gratify his tastes or to consult his disposition. I never tried to be the sort of woman that he fancied. I never tried to make the best of anything to please him. I never tried to secure or to deserve his love. But Mrs. Dryden, indeed—indeed—indeed I was not otherwise, in thought, or word, or deed, unfaithful to my husband. Indeed I love him, though I took so little pains to prove it; and if there is a being upon earth that I could find it in my heart to *hate*, it is that man whom people have *dared*—*have dared* to suppose I loved!"

There was a pause, and then the farmer's wife replied, "If this is the case, Mrs. Warner, why don't you make up matters with the captain? He is hasty, people tell me, but a good man, and a just; leastways, so they say of him."

"No," said Amabel, shaking her head slowly; "he is glad to be rid of me, Mrs. Dryden, and no wonder. No explanation I could give would make us happy now. Indeed," she added, in a lower voice, "I hardly know that, as things now stand, he would believe my explanation."

Probably, if Mrs. Dryden was acquainted with the circumstance of her having ordered a post-chaise by night to be at the Park-gate of Foxley, this was the only part that she believed of this exculpatory testimony.

"Don't go yet, Mrs. Dryden," Amabel said, as the farmer's wife was leaving the chamber. "You have been so good to me,—so kind in my distress, notwithstanding your ill opinion! Will you give me that portfolio from the table? Thank you." And opening it, she took out a note for £50, which her step-father had paid her a few days before, and putting it in Mrs. Dryden's

hand, continued, "Will you give this to your husband? And now, Mrs. Dryden, you know that it is time that I should leave you. You have often said that you have a sister married to a farmer living in your village. Do you think she would receive me as a lodger? I should like to go to her on leaving you."

* * * * *

It was that day week,—the following Monday morning,—Monday in Easter week,—when, all the steps of this somewhat difficult negotiation being accomplished, and Mrs. Dryden having been solicited to accompany her guest upon the journey, and having consented, propitiated by this invitation (which however, she professed herself unable to accept, upon that principle of supererogatory self-sacrifice that sometimes obtains); having consented, I say, on this consideration, to allow her husband to be the escort of their guest on this occasion, Amabel Warner left Foxley on her journey. A post-chaise stood at the door of the farm-house, and Captain Talbot, who had ridden over to settle some last matters of business, kissed his step-daughter as on her wedding morning, and put her into the carriage. He brought her no blessing from her mother, who excused herself from seeing her on the ground that she was ill.

It was a beautiful Spring morning. The dewy buds and blossoms were sparkling in the sunlight. Mrs. Dryden had loaded the carriage with syringa, rosemary, and lilac, white and colored. Amabel's effects, which had been packed by her mother-in-law, and sent over to Foxley, were fastened on the carriage, and she began the journey which was to lead her alone and unprotected into the world.

She leaned back in her carriage, and "*thought all things*," to borrow an expression seen by a friend of mine in the journal of Laura Bridgman, the deaf, dumb, and blind girl of New England.

As her mind dwelt upon her early home in Malta, upon its hopes, its memories, and on the scraps of the knowledge of life that she had lately gained, she said to herself, as memory recalled some portion of her early reading, and brought back to her mind a dispute she had once had with Doctor Glascock: "One is able, even in this nineteenth Christian century, to realize and

sympathize with the old Greek superstition about the stern decrees of an hereditary destiny. When one has done or suffered that which no longer can be cancelled, when some story or some event from which we never can escape, will be pursuing us through life, and be the shadow of our memory, one is able to picture in imagination the sorrows of an *Cædipus*."

CHAPTER XVIII.

Wiser it were to welcome and make ours
Whate'er of good, though small, the present brings—
Kind greetings, sunshine, song of birds, and flowers,
With a child's pure delight in little things ;
And of the griefs unborn to rest secure,
Knowing that mercy ever will endure.

R. C. TRENCH.—Sonnet.

ON the first night they rested at the little town half way between Colchester and London, which was my father's birth-place. The windows of the inn overlooked what had been once the residence of his mother. We may wonder, in the spirit of those biographers who put paragraphs founded on the premises of imagination into their volumes, whether the spirits of the place whispered to Amabel any presentiment of a love more true and tender, faithful and self-sacrificing, than any that mere beauty ever won for its possessor.

They reached London the day following. A heavy rain having begun at Ingatestone, Amabel invited Farmer Dryden inside the carriage. Their talk was mainly about London and its marvels, none of which either of them had seen. The farmer's curiosity was most excited about the wild beasts at Exeter 'Change, and the wonders of the Tower. Amabel listened with interest, smiled, wondered, and brought all her stores of information to bear upon the subject that was interesting to her companion.

On reaching London, they put up at a small tavern in the Borough, where the farmer remembered to have taken up his

quarters on his previous journey through the capital. Nothing could be less inviting than the aspect of this house of entertainment. Amabel was frightened at the idea of being left alone in it, amongst drovers and bagmen, and such people as put up there, and entreated the farmer not to lose sight of her one moment while they stayed. The idea of changing their quarters seems never to have occurred to her. She probably thought all inns in London were alike. They were to pass a day in town for the purpose of consulting the physician most in fashion on certain knotty points referred to his experience by the Doctor in C——. On driving early in the day to his residence, they found, however, that he had been summoned to the country, and that no appointment could be made with him earlier than the following morning, at half-past nine.

As the farmer closed the door of the hackney-coach, he said, after a little hesitation,—“Would you, my lady, be inclined to go and see the show of beasts at Exeter 'Change, or the King's crowns and jewels at the Tower? This coachman says he knows the way, my lady, and can take us straight there and back, my lady, for another half-crown, and the charges he says are not great, about three and sixpence, or so.”

“Oh no!” said Amabel, with, for the moment, something of the air of a fine lady; “Indeed, I'm quite unequal to any sights of the kind. Don't let me keep you, Master Dryden; I would not prevent your enjoying yourself, I am sure.”

But after the coach-door was closed, and the farmer was mounted on the box, and it was evident he had no intention of abandoning her to her own society amongst strangers, Amabel's heart smote her. She pulled the check and stopped the carriage.

“Master Dryden,” she said, with a flush upon her cheeks, “will you tell the man to drive us to Exeter 'Change? I have changed my mind. I should like to see the wild animals, and afterwards, if I feel strong enough, we will go on to the Tower.”

I am ashamed to record it. I blush over the fact, as I set it down. That this woman, “the Divorced,” “the Disowned,” and “the Devoted,” to borrow the titles of other people's novels, crushed to the earth, as she ought to have been, and in a most

painful and equivocal position, should set out in a hackney coach with an old farmer, to see a wild beast show! Had she gone languidly and sullenly through the exhibition, making it evident to each observing mind, and especially to her escort, that her compliance with his wishes was a noble sacrifice of her own feelings, and that nothing upon earth could interest her, I, the chronicler, might have partially consoled myself, and have restored her character as a heroine in the eyes of her friends, the readers of these volumes; but alas! she had never seen any wild animals, and having made the effort to please another, she rewarded herself by going with interest through the exhibition. Its novelty amused her. She lingered, without impatience, among the dens of the unclean beasts as long as the farmer wished it, and fed the elephant with apples; nay, at the Tower, whither they went after having exhausted the larger menagerie, she took a decided and especial interest in the appetite and habits of the boa constrictor.

Farmer Dryden, for years after, told the marvels of that exhibition to his children, and to the children's children that clustered around his knees.

There was about her something of the philosophy of those citizens mentioned by Herodotus, who beguiled their seven years of famine with dice and play. She was just the person to wipe from her eyes the salt of an affliction, and sit down and tell a merry story to a child. I remember to have heard her own opinion on the subject. My father once remarked to her that we should see

"That wounded souls have time to feel their wounds."

She answered, smiling, "Very true. I too can quote you chapter and verse to that effect from a poet equally beloved by you and me.

He that lacks time to mourn, lacks time to mend.
Eternity mourns that. 'Tis an ill cure
For life's worst ills to have no time to feel them.'

But, ask yourself, how many hours there must be by day and by night in which we can retire to the solitary enjoyment of

our grief, instead of intruding it on hours when we have it in our power to assuage the griefs of others, or to assist their little schemes of happiness. Believe me, Theodosius, there are some natures which get only the more appetite for grief from having its indulgence regulated and postponed."

"I am silenced," said my father. "It was certainly not a nature like yours that I was endeavoring to delineate to-day, in my new poem.

'Some men wear out their impressions. Time in some makes deeper dent;
His was not a granite nature, but a sandstone temperament.' "

"Something depends," said Amabel, "upon the state of our health, and therefore a judicious care of herself is one of the primary duties of a woman. There are many sorts of excellence to which a person of deranged nerves can only aspire. To *attain*, he must begin by devoting a year or two of life to his permanent recovery."

* * * * *

On the day following, having had a satisfactory interview with the great West End medical authority, they started on the last third of their journey. Their destination lay about fifty miles to the south west of the metropolis, and their road ran for some part of the way over Bagshot Heath, which, within the memory of my dear father, was noted ground for highwaymen and footpads. No characters of that description, however, troubled them. The day's journey was tedious, and the effect of the wide expanse of uninterrupted heath country depressing. It requires some residence in this Arabia Petrea of Old England, before we can rejoice in the freedom of its moorlands, and glory in a sense of solitude and space, as we measure these wild unvaried wastes with "our own compasses," or shake exultingly the bridles of our horses, as we snuff the air untainted by any previous transit through other human lungs. Amabel knew these pleasures later in her life; but on a first approach, the bare brown heath, without a tree, without inclosure, and almost without habitation, painfully affects the stranger.

She would have given worlds for any sign of spring, some budding verdure. But when at last they turned off from the

heath, and found themselves in a more luxuriant country, she almost wished herself back upon the smooth open roads of the moors.

A heavy rain had lately fallen in the district; and while the moistened earth sent up to heaven an incense of fresh odors, and ten thousand blossoms, grateful to the eye, clothed every bank and crevice with their beauty, the roads, alternate mud and rock, were pretty nearly impassable.

After some terrible jolting, on putting her head out of the carriage-window to ask the farmer what made the way so bad, he answered, to her astonishment, he supposed it was the *rag*.

"*Rag?*" said Amabel, looking round her; and she was then informed that this term was applied by the people to the rough ragged free-stone of the district. They were passing, it appeared to her, through a sort of broken tunnel. The road was as rough as the bed of a Swiss watercourse. The way had been worn as by the action of water, during the lapse of many years, from ten to sixteen feet below the level of the fields. Its steep sides were now covered with every variety of fern and wild flower. Tall trees nodded their heads together at the top from ridge to ridge, while their long tangled roots, washed bare of earth, were the natural trellis around which wound uncultivated creepers. Foxes, and rats, and stoats, and harvest mice, had burrowed in the gravel. On every branch of every tree a bird shook music from its tiny throat. To some natures, nothing is more depressing than the influences of Spring. All is so gay, so blithe, so full of renovation. Their souls seem out of tune with so much gladness. They are set too low for the concert pitch of nature. Amabel felt this; and the beauty of the cultivated earth was even less in harmony with her spirit than the bare bleakness of the moorland. Her heart died within her. All without was full of promise, glad in hope, harmonious in beauty; within there was neither hope nor promise. Her changing cheek, her troubled eye, her nervous agitation, told of her consciousness of many faults, and of her sense of her position.

As they wound into the village, they had one or two noble views of the surrounding country. The village itself lay at the foot

of a very remarkable hill, rising so steeply from the plain that the close, wild, tangled wood that clothed its sides was called, by the country people, the Hañger. The summit was long used as a race ground and a sheep-walk: and to any one who approaches it only from the village, it is a matter of amazement how horses are got up there. The village itself lay under the hill, sheltered from the west winds, which, in winter, sweep the moorland. There were no gentlemen's houses in the neighborhood. The laborers' cottages were mostly built of stone, but thatched. The trees of the district were singular for size and beauty. There was but one long straggling street, chiefly composed of cottages. They drove along this street to the village green. Every child of the place turned out as the chaise passed, to witness the unusual apparition. The men wore green smock frocks curiously ornamented with cunning work. The women on Sundays had red cloaks and hoods, which disappeared upon a week day. At one corner of the green stood the lone tavern of the village. Thither the farmers came to drink a cup; and there, too, could be read, though often a week old, the village number of the county paper. Guests rarely lodged there even for a night. There was no thoroughfare through the village. Once in a great while only it entertained strangers, when Sir John C——'s hounds met in the neighborhood, and the spare room once or twice a year might lodge a wandering pedlar.

Every one supposed the chaise was going to the vicarage; and when it drew up at the Royal Stag on the opposite side of the green, great was the astonishment of the villagers.

The landlady could hardly promise to make the lady comfortable for the night; but, meantime, she showed her into the best parlor, and advised Farmer Dryden to go and see whether his sister-in-law, Hinde, might be expecting them.

Amabel stood at the casement, looking out on the still evening. Before her stood the parsonage,—a quaint, grey house, with a high slated roof, built in Queen Anne's time. No flowers were trained up its front; but a small grass yard, with four tall poplars, separated it from the green. The entrance to the yard was by a tall, slender, rusted iron gate, and a paved walk

led up to the door. On the left of the vicarage was the church, of some antiquity, with a low, grey, square tower, where the swallows built their nests under the ivy, and raised their broods of young. Around it slept the dead of the parish. There were few tombstones; but, marking the character of the place, stood two enormous yews. Amabel looked at the house appointed for all living, and a murmur arose in her heart;—she wished she lay there too.

She saw the farmer cross the green; and at the moment that he did so the door of the vicarage flew open. Out of the iron gate rushed a group of laughing children, making the solemn neighborhood glad with their merry voices. Behind them came the father and the mother. The latter a delicate and pretty woman; the husband not robust, with a pale student face, the air of a born gentleman, mild and expressive features, but sandy, not to say red hair. The children paused in their gambols as they saw the farmer approaching them; and, drawing back behind their parents, became at once shy, silent, and demure. The vicar recognised the farmer, and advanced with his hand extended towards him. Then he introduced him to his wife, and named the children. He seemed to be asking the farmer what had brought him from home. Once or twice they pointed to the post-chaise at the inn-door. Then Farmer Dryden drew the vicar from the group, and walked apart with him. Amabel knew what they were saying, and all her feelings rushed into her cheeks as she thought that even her history was not considered such as Farmer Dryden thought it *fit to name* before the pure and gentle wife of his respected pastor. After a conversation of some moments, they returned. The Vicar spoke to his wife; she nodded, gathered the children round her, and retired into the house. The farmer went his way, and the Vicar crossed the green. She saw him coming towards the inn; she heard his voice below. She heard him say to the landlady, "Is she up stairs? Don't announce me. I will go up alone." In a moment more she heard a rap at the door. It was opened gently, and he entered.

"I am the clergyman of the place," he said, and held out his hand.

She advanced to meet him, and put her hand in his. She was weak from illness, wearied with long travelling, depressed, and yet excited. She put her hand in his, and burst into tears. The Vicar placed her in a chair, stood by her a few moments, and then said kindly, "I have come to tell you that Mrs. Hinde, contrary to my advice, has insisted on fresh painting a room for you. She did not expect you so soon, and it is not ready. Indeed, I think that it would be hardly safe to sleep there for a week or two. Meantime, my wife authorizes me to say she has a room at your disposal. This inn, I think, is hardly a place for you."

Amabel wept more than ever during this address; it was some minutes before she could answer him; then she said, "Forgive me, sir,—excuse me. I am not so foolish always. I am tired and weak now." Then, after a pause, she said, covering her face with both her hands, "You are very good to invite me, but—but—did Master Dryden tell your wife *why* I have come here? Did he tell you about me?"

It was now the Vicar's turn for embarrassment.

"Yes, he told me," said he. "He told me too, that you had been some weeks under his roof. That his wife liked you. That he believed you penitent,—unhappy. We are not prudent people in the world's sense. My wife will do anything she can for you."

"Oh! sir, indeed," cried Amabel, "I have been wrong enough, weak enough, bad enough, but not *so* wrong. There are times, and to-day is one, when I feel my punishment disproportioned to my fault—greater than I can bear."

"We must wait," said the Vicar, solemnly. "We must wait and see the end, both of God's judgments, and of his forbearings. Sometimes the discipline that he provides is necessary for the formation of the Christian character; sometimes for the nurture and encouragement of other Christian souls. Oftentimes it is sent in mercy, to bring us to himself; and he not seldom most afflicts his chosen, because through their submission to his will, he gets most honor to his holy name."

"May I tell you my history?" she said. "I may not tell you my real name, but I may give you the particulars of my life, if

you will promise not to divulge them. I need some help to judge of my own conduct; some one to appeal to. "But I have not one friend, sir, left, in all this wide, wide world."

The Vicar drew a chair and sat opposite to her, in silence, while she gave him the outline of her story. When she had done, he said, "Then the error of your life has been the want of love. Love to God, and love to men; those two contain all, and the former of the two contains the latter," said the Vicar, quoting unconsciously from his favorite author, 'Love to God is the only due principle and spring of all due love to man, and all love that begins there, returns there likewise, and ends there.'

"But," said Amabel, a little hurt that the fact that she had most endeavored to impress upon her hearer was overlooked and unacknowledged. "I loved, . . . I do most truly love my husband."

"And the fruits of that love?" said the Vicar. "We do not recognise any emotion but by its fruits. They do not appear, I think, in your narration. Love," he continued, "is an active principle. Self is the enemy it combats.—In other words, its hostile, its antagonistic principle."

"I am not selfish," said Amabel. "My early attachment was true, steadfast, and sincere; and, I repeat, I love my husband."

"I do not believe your *disposition* selfish, and for that thank God," replied the Vicar. "It is one obstacle the less upon your path to Heaven. But was there not a prevalence of self throughout your married life in your distempered moods of feeling, gloom, despondency, indifference, and other reactions of disappointed desire? There are natures so barren that they hardly receive from others' love the germ of an attachment. Such I do not think can be the case with you. But have you taken the initiative in love? The highest effort of a merely human love, our Lord himself has pointed out when he says 'For if you love them that love you, what thank have ye? for sinners also love those that love them.'"

"I hardly understand you," she replied. "Is love never given where it is not returned?"

"Observe me," said the Vicar. "I speak of love the princi-

ple, not love the passion. If you know love only as a passion, I have nothing more to say. Only this. The passion never lasts without the principle. It will not stand the wear and tear of married life, nor the cooling, on the other side, of conjugal attachment."

After a pause, she added, "I am so young to live a lifetime unloving and unloved."

"Unloving and unloved!" repeated the Vicar. "What human soul does that? Does the Almighty place His birds, His beasts, or even His inanimate creation, where no nourishment for life can be obtained? And is not love the life of the soul? Have we not God's love to us on the one part, and His permission, His command, having freely received, freely to extend that love to others? You may learn wisdom from the plants of the heath, from the trees that spread out their broad roots over the freestone rocks of our wood yonder. My poor lady, God purposes that each of us should have his full development, should come to the full measure of his stature, and each is happy or is miserable in proportion as this development is attained. No one has the opportunity of this development denied him. A woman's development, especially, comes through the exercise of the affections. I grant that to some women this development seems more difficult than to others, because the natural channels for the outgoings and the inpourings of a loving interest seem closed. I grant that your position is difficult and exceptional. So is that of the Old Maid. So was Milton's. Does God exact day labor, light denied? We must gather stubble for our brick, nor minish aught of our daily tasks where straw is withheld. Take a lesson from this little prisoner," he added, pointing to the landlady's bulfinch, which hung above them in its painted cage. "It draws its water with a bucket. Water is necessary for its life, and it obtains it, though in an exceptional, unnatural way."

"This is a hard saying," said Amabel.

"It is indeed," replied the Vicar. "It is almost the great problem of life to us—the riddle of the Sphinx in the nineteenth century. It needs all our faith to unravel it, and every holy aid."

"And, yet," said Amabel, "the people I have met who said

they were the most religious, have been, not unfrequently, the least loveable and charitable of all that I have known."

The Vicar sighed. "There are some natures," he said, "which, having received the milk of the word, seem indeed to turn it sour. But the world has no right to throw the blame of our failings back on *Christianity*. While there exists a perfect type of Christianity incarnate, you have no right to judge it by stunted, misshapen, undeveloped specimens. God commanded love, but His creatures could not obey Him. It required a practical manifestation of love in their own nature and personally towards themselves, to teach them even the true nature of love."

CHAPTER XIX.

Et la mère faisant un effort pour élever la voix. Ma fille, dit elle, le bonheur n'est pas de posséder beaucoup, mais d'espérer et d'aimer beaucoup. Notre espérance n'est pas ici-bas ni notre bonheur non plus, ou s'il y est ce n'est qu'en passant.

LA MENNAIS. *Paroles d'un Croyant.*

WHILE Amabel and the Vicar were discoursing thus, the Vicar's wife was making preparations for her guest's reception. When all was ready she sent one of the children over to her husband; and the Vicar, giving his arm to Amabel, conducted her across the Green. The room made ready for her use was a quiet upper chamber, looking over a large kitchen garden, whose straight walks were bordered with box and flowers.

After an early tea, the family met for evening prayer. It was no dull, dry ceremony, like the offering of family devotion under the roof of Mrs. Warner; but, the object of the Vicar not being the mere respectable performance of a reputable duty, but the praise and worship of Almighty God, and the awakening of devotional feeling in the two or three that were gathered together, pains were taken to engage the attention and the

interest of the youngest and the most ignorant of the little congregation.

The Vicar possessed the accomplishment most rare in his profession. He was a good reader. Indeed, to read the Bible well, is the highest test of taste in elocution. He read, without clipping the sacred narrative into verses; and his beautiful reading did more than any commentary (though he offered a few simple remarks in explanation of the chapter,) to make its meaning clear. The interest and attention of his auditors were kindled by his own. When prayers were over, Amabel went to her own chamber; and when she again left it, found the business of the morning some hours on its way. She found the Vicar's wife teaching her little girls, and busy, while they said their lessons, in cutting out some garments for the poor. Amabel asked her for some needlework, which being given to her, occupied her hands till the Vicar's wife, preparing for a walk, asked if she would like to go to the village school with her. At the school, the lady of the Parish had her attention called in many different directions, and Amabel soon tired of standing before the school-dame's desk, looking at the little chubby faces that lined the cold, white walls.

The Vicar's wife was a good woman, and kind, in all respects, to Amabel, but her mind was taken up by many local cares, and she was by no means a person of extended sympathies. She felt rather afraid of her guest; afraid of the superior knowledge of this wicked world, which she attributed to her; afraid of having her own feelings shocked in such society, or of wounding those of Amabel. Very little communication ever ensued between them. The Vicar's wife, when her husband told her of Amabel's version of her history, said merely, "Well, dear, I suppose she would *say* so." A sentence which contained much more meaning than was apparent in the words.

Be all this as it may, Amabel got tired at the school, and pleading her recent illness as an excuse for her departure, found her way back into the house, and into the Vicar's study. There lay on the table a large volume opened. The Vicar had been consulting it with reference to his late conversation with her. It was Leighton's Commentary upon St. Peter. The part

on the third chapter was open, on the mutual duties of husbands and wives. Amabel hung over the book, and read it eagerly. Her tears were dropping fast upon its leaves, when the Vicar entered the room.

"May I borrow this book?" she said to him.

"Yes, indeed," he answered, putting it into her hands, which he held clasped in his a moment, as he said solemnly: "I pray God that He will bless it to you. Archbishop Leighton is my favorite author. His writings breathe the spirit of his life; his life was the illustration of his writings."

Amabel took away the volume; and the Vicar prayed for its influence upon her heart, as she read it alone in the still, small hours of the night, or in the woods and fields, or on the heath, alone with God and nature.

The book of nature was, she found, the largest and oldest edition of the Bible. Henceforth, like its great antitype, she read it understandingly.

As the spirit of God moved through the void upon the waters, so the spirit of God now brooded over her heart, and there came the first faint dawns of a new light in her soul. She held little personal communication with the Vicar, but she was punctual and eager in her attendance at his church, and after her heart was lifted up to God in the church service, her understanding hung upon his sermons. The doctrines that he taught, at first so strange and new, became, by degrees, clear to her.

It is not our place nor our intention to tell the reader what passed in her soul during these hours, for, with her mind in full activity, she sought no companionship, and, indeed, accepted none. We have exhibited her character as it was formed under the happy influences of her early life; we have shown how it became deteriorated by influences less genial; and yet, how traces of its native sweetness lingered with her throughout. It was about to undergo a renovating influence; but it is not our province to show the process, we have only to exhibit its fruits.

Man was driven forth from Paradise, lest he should take also of the tree of life, and eat and live for ever. The evil poison of the tree of knowledge circulated in his veins, and was

inherited by his posterity ; but the thirst after the knowledge of good, that antagonist principle, which, more or less enlightened, has been at work since the day of Eve's transgression, he brought with him from Eden. Man's aspirations have been always better, higher than himself. Conscience awoke in her. Conscience, the stirrings of the will of God. It stood like the messenger of the Lord to Balaam, warning her from further progress in an evil path ; and as she stretched out her hands for succor, the God of Mercy drew her to himself. She judged herself more harshly, perhaps more truly, than we, who, judging only the external life, pronounce that she was scarcely blameworthy.

* * * * *

Time passed. One day, the Vicar went to visit her at Mrs. Hinde's house, to which she had long before removed. For some days, he had had no news of her, and he took the path that led him through the woods, because he thought he might meet her in her haunts. She was not there. A stupid servant, under a vague impression that he was come to read the service for the visitation of the sick, admitted him without question into her chamber. She was sitting up in bed, her infant, some few hours old, clasped closely in her arms ; and as she saw him, her face was lighted with a glow such as he never yet had seen there. She half presented him the child, and cried, "I shall not die, but live, and declare the works of the Lord."

* * * * *

I hardly feel myself competent to touch upon this portion of her history. To every unmarried woman there is something solemnly mysterious in motherhood, and only from the yearnings of our own hearts towards little children, can we guess the brooding tenderness of a mother's love.

Amabel's affection for her boy was her one tie to existence. They tell me there is rarely born a more puny, weakly, miserable babe ; yet such as it was, its mother's life seemed bound up in its own. A tender light softened her eyes when she looked upon its face. It became her one thought and her one dream. Her affection for her son was passion. In him her own existence was renewed, free from the blight that had over-

taken it. She dreamed dreams of the future for her boy, visions of future happiness, distinction, honor, and reward. Sometimes she fancied him, under an assumed name, the hero of a naval victory, saving the life of his own father, and being triumphantly, joyfully, repentantly acknowledged his son. And then, in the midst of her excitement and exultation, would come the bitter thought that through her fault all the advantages of a father's name, a father's love, a father's influence, must be denied to him. Even her inexperience told her how much he might reproach her for the trials he would meet, if hoarding all her wealth for his advancement, she sent him into the world in an anomalous position. Yes, for her boy's sake she could brave the displeasure of his father, she could conquer all the suggestions of pride, of anger, and of wounded feeling, which, in the intervals of her self-reproach, made themselves heard. For her son's sake she could implore a forgiveness, which for herself were impossible. For his sake she would write a letter to her husband.

With many tears and many prayers, and with that sort of timid, morbid conscientiousness which takes undeserved blame sooner than it will accord it when due, she wrote to Captain Warner the letter from which I have filled up my own outline knowledge of this narrative. I wish I could have given it entire, but this I had no right to do. It would have worked upon the reader's feelings by the mournful, lingering tenderness with which, in some places, she dwells on the brief hopes of her married life, on her growing appreciation of her husband, on all the signs and tokens that she cherished of his love. At times, she seems to have done violence to the warmer impulses of her own heart, striving to take a tone of dignified impartiality, to state facts without drawing inferences; and after a few such paragraphs, the bitterness of a reproachful conscience pierces the coldness she assumes; or as her eyes, perhaps, rested on her baby's face, she breaks forth into tender beseechings for forgiveness—into protestations of fidelity.

She wrote her letter when still weak from recent suffering; at that period of her convalescence, when under happier circumstances, a proud and loving husband would have taken her

light form in his strong arms, and have carried her for the first time beyond her chamber ; when friends and gossips, greeting her reappearance, would have been offering congratulations, and delighting her assenting heart by admiration of her babe, when all would have found some trace of the father in its face, and when that father, proud of the name, joyful, generous, loving as he was, would, in the full contentment of a happy heart, have given back to her, in her new relation, all that she had forfeited.

She wrote this letter to her husband sitting night after night by the peat embers, in spite of all remonstrance, alone by the cradle of her child ; the guardian of its troubled sleep ; lulling it from time to time with words and looks expressive of a more tender, passionate affection than any that when hired women watched her she ventured to employ ; repeating over and over again, in its unconscious ear, the name of Leonard Warner—Leonard Warner—Leonard Warner.

She had got a habit of repeating that name in half-tones, over and over, unconsciously, when no one else was near. And thus this letter drew in part its inspiration. She poured into it all the feelings of her heart, nor knew how much of all she felt and there expressed, owed its existence to the love that in the hour of her loss she first acknowledged to the father, how much to her passionate affection for the child.

It was twelve o'clock one night when she finished the last, the strongest, the tenderest appeal in all the letter. She folded it, she unfolded it, looked again and again at the lines that would first meet his eye, and tried to imagine the sensations it would excite when he first opened it. Then timidly, with blushes, and with a quick beating at her heart,—as a young girl pressing for the first time her lips on the handwriting of her lover is startled by the voice of her own modesty—she pressed a kiss upon its pages, and then again, again upon its words, upon its seal, wherever it seemed to her his fingers perhaps might rest upon her kisses. She pressed it to her baby's lips, she strained it to her heart, she kept it safe from her own tears, she breathed prayers over it, and then laying it sealed and folded before her on the desk, she added the direction, to

CAPTAIN LEONARD WARNER, R. N.

H. M. S. Magician,

inclosing it in an outer envelope, directed to Mrs. Warner.

And this letter, over which so much emotion had been spent, did not reach its destination. In brief (for I have no taste nor skill for making mysteries, and am recording the simplest and most probable of contingencies), it ought to have been directed as all letters are for officers or men at sea, to her husband's agent or to the Admiralty. When old Mrs. Warner, who was prejudiced like every English man and woman of well regulated mind during the old franking days against extravagance in postage, received this bulky envelope, she thought it would be a pity to send her son at great expense a letter which she was sure would be unwelcome. She was too strictly principled to suppress a letter. She wrote to Captain Warner telling him that she had received a very heavy package from his wife; should she forward it to him?

This letter reached him at an unpropitious moment, when worried by some business connected with a court-martial. He answered it immediately in the negative. He wished, he said, for no communication from his wife. There could be no necessity for such communication, as he had liberally provided for her.

Old Mr. Warner had anticipated such an answer, but perhaps her son afterwards regretted it, when softer thoughts of his young wife rose in his heart as he paced the quarter-deck during the night watches; yet even at such moments the image of Amabel appeared before him, not desolate, sad-hearted, and repentant, but glad to have regained her liberty, satisfied with her new position, undomestic in her ways.

Sometimes, when he fancied the attentions of other men insulting her, he grew frantic. He cursed his evil fate in having married her, his worse fate in having left her; and resolved, as soon as professional honor would permit, to return and seek news of her. He would watch her from a distance,

never see her, never forgive her, never hold any communication with her, but no man should insult her with impunity; no man should presume to think her unprotected.

CHAPTER XX.

Shall my soul stoop, her new found prize forget,
And yield her courage to a vain regret?

MISS C. MACREADY. *MSS.*

I REMARKED in the last chapter that Captain Warner had been worried by the proceedings of a court-martial, which court-martial, so soon as Buonaparte had been disposed of, he requested on his own conduct, in relation to the abduction of a French prisoner; Colonel Guiscard having laid his version of the tale before the Admiralty. It was a bore to my Lords Commissioners, who could willingly have dispensed with any such proceeding, having plenty of more important business on their hands; but as Captain Warner demanded investigation, a court of inquiry was held at Malta, which resulted in acquittal. How far it may have thrown light upon the dark portions of Felix Guiscard's history I cannot tell, never having seen any report of the proceedings. Indeed, "our own correspondent" in the morning papers, confined himself in that day to very limited accounts of mere matters of local interest.

The few lines devoted to the subject ended to the effect that "the humane and gallant Captain, having received publicly the commendations of his superior officers for his conduct in the fleet since the late commencement of hostilities, was triumphantly exonerated from all the charges brought against him."

Amabel, whose only interest now in life beyond the welfare of her son, was in the naval intelligence of the morning papers, read this paragraph again, again, and again with ever varying emotion. In these few words the interest of the whole newspaper appeared comprised. To her eyes they were printed in large type. She cut them out, and then destroyed the

paper, fearing lest by her preservation of the paragraph her interest in Captain Warner might be discovered by other eyes. It is my belief that had she at that time died suddenly, these few words folded on her heart would have revealed the secret of her love. So absorbing a power had her new affection, that vague as the intelligence was so far as related to the escape of Felix Guiscard, it was enough to make her sure that Ferdinand must be a villain. She never thought of doubting the correct judgment of the court-martial. In her heart of hearts, her husband had long had his acquittal. She knew he was incapable of a dishonorable action, or his affection for herself extenuated in her eyes any stratagem of love. She had long felt sure that some excuse or explanation could be made for him; and now that Not Guilty was pronounced professionally, her mind delighted to depose all doubts at the foot of his acquittal. In proportion as her heart and judgment exonerated Captain Warner, she found a pleasure in convincing herself that she *hated* Colonel Guiscard. She believed him capable of any villainy. Every remembrance of him brought the blood into her face and sent a sharp pang through her bosom. The thought of him would take her unawares, and make her start, and say wild words, and use impatient gestures, which the people about her interpreted as they would.

Day after day passed, and her poor child, instead of growing larger, seemed to shrivel away. Its poor little weak arms were bent and withered. Its little face had an habitual expression of weak suffering. The mother sent for new doctors. They came from a distance, knew the case was hopeless, but being obliged to prescribe something, recommended a change of nurse. They say that it was piteous to see the mother's look, as she resigned her treasure into other hands, her secret envy as she watched it lying on the bosom of another. And as she took him back into her arms one can understand the jealous impulse which made her press him closer to her own maternal heart.

The poor little fellow wasted. He came into the world at an unpropitious season. They might perhaps have saved him had he been born in early spring, with bright soft summer

weather for the first days of his life; but in the chilling breath of a cold November, he withered away. His mother watched him without rest. Day and night she held him on her knees for a week before he died. It gave her pain when any other woman touched him. She went about without tears, but with a vacant look of acute suffering. You would have said that she was so absorbed in watching the slow approach of a great sorrow that she was hardly sensible to the reality of any present grief.

Only a few hours before he died, when his little life seemed nearly spent, and the doctors and wise women first said that he must die, she sent on a sudden, by early daylight, for the Vicar. He came and baptized the child. She called him Leonard; but her voice was choked as she tried to say the name, and she wrote it for the pastor. They could not get her to attend to the entry in the parish register, and indeed her distress was so great that the Vicar did not persist in troubling her.

The baby died at day-break the next morning. His mother watched the final gaspings of his feeble life—watched with her hands clasped close, straining the very nerves of her thin fingers.

There was no help that could be offered; every human aid was powerless, pity and love had no refuge but in prayer. They could only watch a struggle of which the end was not uncertain. They stood around to see him die. At length the women present all drew back. The parting pang was over.

There had been no word spoken in the chamber for some time. At last one of the women whispered something to another. The mother heard her words or caught their meaning.

"*I know* he is dead," she exclaimed vehemently; and starting wildly from the low chair on which she sat, she clasped her son's corpse tightly to her breast, and began walking backwards and forwards in the room, as if lulling back to an uneasy sleep the child that slept the sleep that knows no waking.

She shed no tear, but in her eyes there gleamed a wild

strange look of half bewildered horror. The women were afraid of her. They stood together in a corner of the room and whispered one to another. But anything that they might now say in her presence was unheard. Then they made attempts to get the child away, but did not know how to manage her, and, as I said, were afraid of her. They succeeded only in irritating her.

"Leave us alone. Leave us in peace," was all she said, and pressed her baby closer.

At last the doctor came. He drew off the women. "You must not anger her," he said, "but get her into bed. This is partly want of sleep. Tears will relieve her."

He went up to her with an air of authority, and offered to take the baby out of her arms. She looked him in the face, stopped in her walk, and drew back from him. Then stooping towards the cradle she laid in it the body of her child, composed its little limbs, took off its tiny cap, kissed its pale temples, smoothed down the little hair upon its head, and motioned to the doctor to give her another cap, pointing to a drawer. He obeyed her. The little ruffle was adjusted round its face. It looked happy and asleep, marble white and calm, without a trace of suffering. She gave one last long gaze upon it, such a gaze as one may venture to imagine when a mother looks her last, and then rose up, turning towards the Doctor, this time with a look that seemed to say, "There! all is done. What do you expect more of me?" He took her by the arm, and led her to another chamber. . . .

All through that day and the next night she lay upon her bed. She uttered no murmur of complaint; she was quiet and gentle when they spoke to her; but the expression of her face never varied. It wore a stony look. Suffering was stamped on all the features, but no sort of expression was in the eyes. She heard them saying something about her lack of tears, and she said piteously, "Ask God not to let me lose my reason. I wish that I *could* cry."

Thank God, bless God all ye who suffer not
More grief than ye can weep for.

They had heard how a mother's tears have been made to flow after bereavement at the sight of little relics of the darling she has lost, and they strewed her room with things that had belonged to him. In vain. Nature was exhausted; she was insensible to the reality of her loss, and only conscious of some great sense of bitter sorrow. At last they were getting much alarmed about her, when she heard some one saying outside her door that a letter for her had come. . . Should it be given her?

She started up at once upon her bed, and eagerly asked to have the letter. It was rare for her to receive one. For weeks, with hope that sickened day by day, and yet took heart at the hour that the mail came in, she had watched for this arrival. She held out her hand for it. She thought for a moment the direction was in the desired writing. She broke the seal. The superscription had deceived her. The letter was from Olivia

She burst into tears. She wept for the griefs of her married life, wept in self pity for her present fate, wept for the death of her lost babe, wept for the disappointment of the moment; wept with a mere sense of the relief brought by those precious tears. They relieved the oppression on her brain, and then she slept. Her tears had saved her.

She continued some days in this state, showing little disposition to contend with the people round her, who insisted that she had better not revisit her child's room. They even roused her to attend to some of the arrangements for mourning, and the funeral. Cares, that, however they may jar upon the feelings, are of service to the afflicted, rousing them (by petty worries) from an absorbing sense of their bereavement, and providing what is of most service to a disposition like Amabel's, something they are compelled to do. She enclosed £30 to a London dressmaker, ordering her to send down without delay, everything necessary for the deepest mourning.

She went herself to the funeral. She stood sole mourner, calm and tearless by the coffin, while others were performing the last rites. When all was over, and the damp sods of the churchyard hid it from her view, and the very ministers of

death were preparing to go away, she still stood silently watching the spot beside the grave where they had first set down the little coffin. The Vicar took her by the arm, and led her from the churchyard.

"I prayed for you with my whole heart," he said to her.

"I did not hear the funeral service," she answered. "I was not even thinking of my child. I seemed to be living over a scene that I once saw in Malta. It was the funeral of just such a little one. They buried her with her face exposed upon an open bier, without a coffin. The children who had known her, scattered flowers in the grave. It was half full of flowers when they began to throw earth over her. The old people gathered round the mother. She walked away leaning upon her husband's arm, he comforting her. They prophesied to her, a new, a living son, in place of her dead baby. How came I to think of this at such a moment? Can you account for it? I should have been thinking only of my own, my own dead child."

He wanted to take her home to his vicarage, but she declined, and turned away alone into the beech wood, by the path that led to Mrs. Hinde's. The Vicar had an engagement that afternoon at the further end of his extensive parish, and so let her depart alone, but he deeply regretted not having provided for her safety, when, towards midnight, he was called up by a message from Mrs. Hinde. "The lady had not come home. Was she passing the night at the parsonage?"

Starting up from his warm bed, he went out into the chill night air, in search of her. He turned his steps first into the churchyard; and there, as he expected, found her sitting on a tomb, too much benumbed in body and in mind to give much account of how she came there. All she could say, seemed a species of excuse. "I have been meaning to get up and go home; I have, indeed, sir."

He carried her in his arms back to the vicarage, where his wife and maid kindled a blazing fire, and chafed her stiffened limbs, and sat up all that night with her. They kept her there a day or two, but she spent most of her time looking at the graveyard from her window, unless any person brought her

anything to do, when she mechanically took it in hand and finished it.

They learned afterwards what had become of her when she parted from the Vicar at the gate of the churchyard. She had wandered away through the beech woods, where the skeleton trees, dropping their russet mantles round their feet, stood bare and dreary, to a small cabin on the edge of the black moorland. A poor woman lived there with a large family. The tenth child, an infant, had died three weeks before. Its wicker cradle now stood empty by the wall, and it slept its sleep near little Leonard, by the yew tree, in the churchyard.

The mother was washing. I suppose she would have given her life for her baby's life in the horrors of shipwreck, in time of pestilence, or even in the fearful trial of famine, when human nature sinks, by slow stages, into brute nature; but now, that the poor thing was dead and buried, she returned to her interest in other duties, and like David, having fasted and wept while the child lived, after its death she put aside her sorrow, to be indulged in only of a Sunday afternoon, with her Bible in her hand, and her best gown on, or on a quiet evening, when she was not too tired, and the children were asleep, and all the work put by. She looked up from her wash-tub, and saw a woman standing in deep black, pale and silent, at her door. She guessed who it must be at once, and, wringing the soap-suds from her arms, and wiping down a chair, asked the lady to be seated. Amabel came in without speaking. The woman, embarrassed by her silence, began to make apologies for Tommy's dirty face, and Sarah Jane's torn pinafore, and her own untidy condition. "But, where there's such a sight of children," she said, "it takes a body more than her whole time to slave after them."

"And you have lost a little boy?" said the visitor.

"Yes," replied the mother, recalled to a remembrance of her bereavement. "He was long a-dying, and there was a sight to do when he was ill. Things got all behindhand. I am just beginning to tidy up a bit; and here's Sarah Jane, the doctor says, is threatened with consumption. Let go the lady's

gown, child, or I'll beat you. Yes, my lady, I've had a deal to struggle through this year past. My poor little Davy! That was his little cradle. As I say, they are better off in Heaven, Ma'am, if we could only think so."

Amabel stood up. She had come round there partly to feed her own grief upon the sorrows of another. The thoughts that this woman expressed, simple as they were, were to her unlooked for. That life had any interests and duties left, that children bring us worries, and anxieties, and troubles, even the simple thought that consoled this hard-working, rough woman, that the baby she had lost was better off in Heaven, came freshly to her heart. Old truths newly realized, bring most comfort in affliction.

"I came," . . . she said, "I thought . . . you might be glad to put up a little stone to the memory of your infant. *You may* put a stone and a name over him. My boy is buried near."

She put a ten pound note into the woman's hand, and went back to sit till midnight on the grave, where the kind Vicar found her in the chilling dampness, and in deepening gloom.

CHAPTER XXI.

If our first lays too piteous have been,
 And you have feared our tears would never cease ;
 If we too gloomily Life's prose have seen,
 Nor suffered Man nor mouse to dwell in peace,
 Yet pardon us for our youth's sake. The vine
 Must weep from her crushed grapes the generous wine ,
 Nor without pain the precious beverage flows.
 Thus joy and power may yet spring from the woes
 Which have so wearied every long-tasked ear.—UHLAND.

SHE spent a day or two at the Vicarage, where all that could be done was done to rouse her. The truth is, it was very difficult to lead one who had so few interests in life and so few ties,

from one sole thought to a sense of life's remaining pleasures and duties.

She sat all day at the window of her room, looking out upon the churchyard, thinking frequently how greatly she disliked the Vicar's wife, for feeling, as she knew she felt, that this immoderate grieving for her loss was impious and unnatural. When she went back to Mrs. Hinde's it was but a nominal return to her old lodging, for she haunted her child's grave by the yew tree in the churchyard.

One afternoon the Vicar, finding that he could not persuade her to quit the nameless little mound, carried her some dinner. It was time to bring to bear upon the case his personal influence and his pastoral authority. He sat down beside the grave, and repeated that beautiful passage of the Scriptures beginning; "But I would not have *you* ignorant, brethren, concerning them that are asleep, that ye sorrow not even as others that have no hope."

She seemed to pay it no heed. He said, "I must speak plainly to you. As the ambassador of God I am called to counsel you. You have yielded long enough to what I may venture to call the instincts of your grief; it is time that you should now assert the empire of your reason."

"It is many days," she answered, "since I have read a chapter in the Bible, but one verse seems ever ringing through my mind. 'These two things are come upon thee in one day, loss of children and widowhood.' I went to see Mrs. Gresse at the Wood's End after my child's funeral, but her sorrow was not like my sorrow."

"How old are you?" said the Vicar.

"I am barely twenty-one."

"And with a strong constitution and the prospect of a long life, can you fancy that the Father of Mercies intends that at twenty-one the loves and interests of life should terminate for you? At twenty-one we stand upon the threshold of real life. 'The present day may be the better for yesterday's error.'"

"Ah! yes," said Amabel. "This is true, no doubt, to you. But place yourself in my case, lose at one blow and by your

own fault, wife, children, honor, station, family influences and family ties !”

“ ‘My grace is sufficient for thee, for my strength is made perfect in weakness.’ I should blame myself,” the Vicar answered, “if I had not the courage to do what should be done by a wise mind.”

“What would you do?”

“I should try to remember that in God the Christian not only rests all his hopes, but has his relations to *all things*. That as a Christian there is promised him ten-fold even in this life for all that he has lost, father, mother, wife, and children here, and in the world to come life everlasting.”

“I hardly understand you,” said Amabel.

“To what end,” said the Vicar, “are all the good gifts of God bestowed upon His people? For what three ends did God Almighty give you your child, for instance, or your husband?”

She did not answer.

“For your good,—and for their good,—and for His own glory.”

She shuddered.

“These blessings have been now recalled, but other gifts are left. Your health and strength, your money, and God’s poor.”

“A blessing?”

“Most undoubtedly; and they are always with you. Is it not a privilege to those who have lost all themselves to find all again in Christ even in this world?”

“Day after day since my loss,” she replied, “I have said I will arouse myself, yet grief importunate has pleaded for indulgence. How shall I begin? What do you expect of me?”

“Begin,” said the Vicar, “by reestablishing your relations with the world. There are interests enough hidden under the surface of things about us. ‘Grasp into the thick of human life.’ Whatever your hand brings up, will awaken healthy new emotion. Make the most, in the worst of circumstances, of their attendant advantages. For example, in your position you have lost all you enumerate, but have gained an independence in exchange. How many, bound to uncongenial duties, would

gladly begin life afresh, as you can do! 'The good goat will browse where she is tethered,' says our proverb. I should give you almost the advice that I would give to an old maid

"To such an one belongs, in the first instance, social duties of all kinds. Not merely care of the poor, but the promotion of the benefit of others in all the relations between man and man.

"Positive work is a great blessing. That unmarried woman is, I think, the happiest, who labors by her head or by her hands for some portion of her income. Still, work is of many kinds. In your case, the charge of a fortune, the duties of housekeeping, and of a country lady, would supply you with actual necessary occupation.

"Thirdly, care of her own health is necessary to the single woman. Nothing can be done without health in her position. Neglected health is the soil from which spring many sorrows.

"And lastly," said the Vicar, "a woman without arbitrary ties, can so regulate her life as to be much in God's service, and in prayer for others, in his temple, like Anna, the Prophetess, a widow indeed."

"Then," said Amabel, and her eyes rekindled as she raised them to the Vicar's face, "advise me, if you can, what are the first practical steps by which all this may be accomplished. I have courage, health, and energy, thanks to my happy childhood; you tell me I have independence. In God's name, if life has anything to offer, let me claim it now."

"As a first step," said the Vicar, "I would recommend your taking a house in this or in some other country neighborhood. The influence of our country gentry is immense. The poor would have positive and established claims upon you, and your position give you claims at once on the respect and attention of the poor."

"I thought of it," said Amabel. "I have thought of it. But my position was uncertain. I hoped I have hoped lately for a reconciliation with my husband. I had thought of taking some small place, it might be in this neighborhood, but then, my child's feet would have made music in my house, now"

"One moment o'er her face
The tablet of unutterable thoughts was traced."

Then came a sudden vision of herself as Lady of the Manor, occupying an independent position, respected in her neighborhood, with loving interests in others, and herself beloved. She imagined the return of Captain Warner, a man on whom the opinions of other men reacted very strongly. She knew his character well enough to be sure, that in such a position, she would be able to command his forgiveness and regard far more than by any pathetic appeals to his sympathy.

The Vicar sat silent. He could see a struggle going on within her mind, and waited till her next remark gave indication of its nature.

"What places are to be let in this neighborhood?" she said. "I should only wish to hire."

"Not many very near here. This is the most retired vicinity in England, and we have few country seats about us. There is a pretty little cottage, at a low rent, in a parish about fifteen miles from here, of which a friend of mine is the incumbent; but it is on the other side of the Great Heath, and can scarcely be got at, the roads are so bad. There is Horton Hall, a mile or two from here."

"A place much too expensive for my six hundred per annum."

"Hardly. Its hay would almost pay the rent, and its possession give you great influence amongst us."

Amabel half laughed.

"It is absurd," she said, "my setting out to manage all these matters. I am so inexperienced. I have made so signal a failure in whatever I have undertaken hitherto. How should I ever look after an estate, and fulfil the duties of my Lady Bountiful?"

"We would have great patience with your efforts, and allow you a handsome per centage of egregious errors for the first few months," the Vicar replied.

"Is Horton Hall on view?"

"Yes; if I put my forrest pony into old Hinde's tax cart, will you let me drive you there?"

Amabel pondered, with a half smile on her face.

She had vigor of mind, and a happy vigor of constitution. In spite of watching and of sorrow, regular exercise, and the pure air of this open country, had renewed her strength.

A person of her temperament must be roused by practical suggestions, and the want of anything practical in our consolations is the reason why we so seldom console. Such a person is also peculiarly dependent, in cases where the mind is unstrung, upon the patient wisdom of a judicious friend. Point out something to be done, win his interest and his attention, allure him to exertion, and you have carried him more than half way on the road to his recovery.

Amabel assented to the proposition the Vicar made, and they both arose. As they did so, she caught sight of a post-chaise entering the village.

"What can that be?" she said hurriedly.

Before he had time to answer her, it drew up on the Green, and a man inside, after making an inquiry, got out and walked towards the Vicar's door.

Amabel made a sudden exclamation. All the projects and the visions that had been floating in her mind a moment or two before, had vanished.

"It is for me," she cried. "I know him. He is our lawyer, Mr. Trevor. He has come to see me."

"Shall I see him first?" said the Vicar, observing how much she was agitated.

"Yes, if you would! But let me know . . . soon . . . quickly, if you please, does he come from . . . from . . . my husband?"

The Vicar went towards his own door, and left her standing alone under the yew tree. She covered her face with her hands.

How marvellous is the power of thought! By one brief thought our weakness becomes strong. Five minutes' thought may send us back into the world enriched with a purpose that shall adorn a life-time.

"God help me!" she said slowly. The thought expanded into prayer. 'A word to God is a word from God.'

The Vicar returned. There was a new light in her eyes, and

brought to bear. Her affection for her dead son had been passion, too exclusive to awaken the real springs of lovingness in her heart. The death of her child had left her nerveless, spiritless, lonely in the world. A new era in her life seemed about to begin. The fountains of love had not been opened in her; but with a new position, new relations, and new responsibilities, a new experience was at hand. She was to learn in a few hours the impossibility henceforth of doing good by anything but by her personal relations to others. Not her money but her influence was to be blessed, blessed through the direct and indirect working from the inward to the outward of the holy spirit of love.

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END OF PART SECOND.

a grave smile on her lip. He seemed to look compassionately upon her.

"It is a messenger for you, but not from the quarter you expect," he began.

"Bad news? In pity tell it me . . . at once."

The grave smile lingered on her lip, but the light in her eyes was troubled.

"It is not good news. It is a death."

"Is it . . . is it Leonard . . . my husband? Is it Captain Warner?"

"My news has no relation to your husband. Have you had no letters lately?"

"Several from my half-sister."

"Did they say nothing about your mother's illness? I am told they were on that subject."

"I never read one of them."

"They have sent your man of business here to find you. He describes the present position of your family as most melancholy. Your mother's death was hastened by the unfortunate position of Captain Talbot's affairs. He has embarked in speculations, which have swallowed up his fortune. He, himself, overwhelmed by the same blow, has had a stroke of paralysis, which leaves him helpless, and has weakened all his faculties. Bailiffs are in the house. The family is without a head, and is anxious for your presence. Captain Talbot, the lawyer tells me, is continually asking for you."

"I am ready. I am prepared to start at once," she exclaimed with energy.

The Vicar was astonished. He had expected that his news would overpower her. He found her calm and strong. He did not know, indeed, how slight had been the intercourse between her and her mother's family. She might have felt her orphanhood more keenly, had not the few unhappy months of their intercourse weakened instead of strengthened mere natural ties. Amabel was not insensible, but in her secret heart I believe she grieved less for her own loss than for Captain Talbot's sorrows. In all the intercourse that she had had with him she had found him kind and fatherly.

There passed through her mind a vision of assisting him, of aiding all of them, of being useful and of consequence amongst them, of possessing through them once more family influence and family ties.

She went into the Vicarage, and exchanged a few words alone with Mr. Trevor. When she came forth again, though there was a composed, calm gravity about her face, her step had grown more buoyant than of late. It was no longer the slow, listless, hopeless tread to which she had grown accustomed.

She hurried home through the Hanger. Mrs. Hinde saw her coming, and marvelled at the rapidity of her walk. Everything was at once put into a bustle. In half an hour her trunks were packed. The people at the farm could not understand, except they interpreted her conduct by affectation or hypocrisy, how a woman late so nerveless and indifferent could have so much authority, energy, and decision now.

She took with her about £200 in money, which was afterwards of great assistance to her.

The Vicar drove round in the chaise to the farm to take leave of her. She took him up for a few moments into her dead child's chamber, and gave him charge of the little crib and of some other things. What more passed during the few minutes they were alone together she never told, but when she came out of the chamber, the tears that glistened on her cheek had melted for ever the old hard stony look out of her eyes. He put her into the carriage. The people round it caught brokenly a few of their last words.

"Yes; I feel the worst is past." "Indeed, I thank you."
"To lead a new life." "I will; God helping me."

They passed rapidly through the village. Crossing the green she leaned forward to look her last towards the churchyard and its western yew tree. She smiled a farewell to the Vicar's wife who stood at her own gate watching her, and overcoming a sore temptation to give way to tears and silence, turned with some question about her mother's death to her travelling companion.

"Action! Work, work at any price," said her heart. The spirit of duty was active, the spirit of love had not yet been

PART III.

CHAPTER I.

The glow, the glance had passed away,
The sunshine and the sparkling glitter,
Still though I noticed pale decay
The retrospect was scarcely bitter ;
For in their place a calmness dwelt
Serene—subduing—soothing—holy.

THESE lines were much admired by my father ; perhaps he too felt they could be made to have reference to *her*. I learned them by heart when a very little girl, and quote them now from memory. They are from Blackwood's Magazine for the spring of 1829, and are part of a very sweet poem by Delta, called "Time's Changes."

Take the train from London, reader, if you wish to visit our localities, and let it put you out at a lone station, in the midst of that desolate heath country through which the old high-road to Portsmouth used to run,—the wilderness of moorland which lies upon the borders of Hampshire and Surrey. You may take a post-chaise at this place if you will, either at the staring hotel of the station or at a little country inn a couple of hundred yards to the right of it, at the sign of Tumble-down-Dick, a name not uncommon with inns in that vicinity, given probably in derision of the downfall of Richard Cromwell.

Your chaise will carry you some dozen miles over the most barren country that your eyes have ever lighted on. Not a tree, not a green herb, not a house nor rill of water. In September, when the purple heath is in full blossom, this moorland is extremely beautiful ; but at all other seasons of the year it lies as far as the eye can reach a brown and sombre mass, stretching out to the horizon, undulated it is true, but unrelieved by any change of tint, save where the passing clouds

reflect themselves upon its surface. Passing at length through a straggling country town, stretch your head out of the window, and yonder on your left hand at the edge of the dun moorland catch a glimpse of that white mansion. . . . You go on your way pondering sad thoughts of man's faithlessness and cruelty, and thinking over one of the mysteries of general interest inherited by the men of this generation. You have seen the house celebrated for the loves of a secretary and a waiting-woman—of Swift and Stella.

Travel on, and by and by a park wall skirts the moorland. On;—and where three ways appear to meet, or rather where the public road diverges into three mere cart tracks, your carriage sets you down before what is a high brick wall, but looks a hedge of ivy. You enter through a doorway fashioned through the wall, and find yourself walking up a straight paved path to a dull and sombre Elizabethan cottage. Pass through its hall; stand on the lawn beneath its windows. The scene has changed. You are at the edge of the moorland. The long barren waste lies out of sight behind the cottage. You are on an elevation looking down upon a cultivated valley. At your feet winds a tortuous and tiny river, yonder is the village steeple, crowned with dark ivy, peeping coyly through the trees; all around is fertility and cultivation, in the distance stretch wide hilly tracts of the blue moorland. Flowers breathe out their little life beside your feet. The very aspect of the house is not the same; on the side that you entered, it was sombre as a castle, on the lawn side a rustic porch gives to what was, at the time of which we write, a very small and inconvenient dwelling, an air of refinement, taste, and care.

In the small low parlor of this cottage towards the close of a summer afternoon, two years after the closing date of the last part of our story, an old man whom sickness had much worn, with sharpened features and long thin white hair, was asleep before a smouldering fire of peat, though it was early summer. Beside him were two girls, one with a low and sullen brow, who was standing at a window making marks with her breath and fingers on the panes; the other, a young, fragile, delicate, timid creature crouched on a low footstool, with a

Part Third.

DRAWN CHIEFLY FROM PAPERS GIVEN ME BY
THEODOSIUS ORD: MY FATHER.

Per correr miglior acqua alza le vele
Omai la navicella del mio ingegno,
Che lascia dietro a se mar sì crudele ;
E canterò di quel secondo regno,
Ove l' umano spirito si purga,
E di salire al ciel diventa dagno.

DANTE. *Purgatorio.*

To scud o'er brighter wave : I spread the sails
Of my yacht Fancy ; which but now has left
Far in her wake yon boisterous cruel sea.
And fain I sing of that fair second realm
Wherein the human soul herself may purge,
And grow more worthy to ascend to Heaven.

book she was endeavouring to study or to read. The door opened suddenly, and a fine boy nine years old rushed in. He had the dark hair and dark eyes of the elder girl, the open brow and the refined expression of the younger of the two.

"Where's Amabel?" was his first question.

"What do you come in here for with your dirty shoes, sir?" was the elder girl's rejoinder. "Take yourself off, come."

A sort of contemptuous laugh met this assumption of authority, and the boy repeated "Where is Amabel?" advancing as he said so into the room.

"Oh! Ned, what a pretty rose that is," said Annie, the younger sister.

The old man opened his eyes, and stretched out his hand towards it.

"Don't give it him, Annie," said the boy roughly. "No, father—not this—you can't have *this*, sir. Annie, I met the new visitor coming over the heath to the Hill Farm."

"Give my father that rose directly, Ned," said Olivia, snatching it. "Are his own children to be taught by strangers to fret and worry him? He *shall* have it, I say."

"Be quiet, I tell you, Olivia! You will break it. It's from Horace. It is for Amabel."

"What is the matter, Olivia?" said a steady voice. A hand was laid on Edward's shoulder; and at that presence every angry word subsided in the room.

"Oh! it is of no use now," said Olivia. "Wherever *you* come that boy has the privilege of insulting us. I give it up in despair.

"It's just *this*, Amabel," cried the boy eagerly; "father wanted the rose which Horace sent you—the only one of the kind—poor fellow—in his garden; and he has been nursing it all the spring for you."

"And you grew very rude, and very much excited," said Amabel, turning him round, and pointing with a half smile to the reflection of his red face in a small looking-glass. As she did so she took a bunch of roses from a jar, and approaching her step-father, Captain Talbot, offered to exchange them for Horace's white rose. There was no fuss, no excitement in

her manner, and the poor paralytic allowed her to take the flower, placing the roses she had given him in his button-hole. "Now, Ned," she said, "you may come up stairs with me. Bring your books, but be very quiet, poor little Joseph must not be disturbed."

There was a calm authority about her manner which restored quiet to the room. But oh! how changed she is since we last saw her. She has lived such years as tell upon the close of life, and make old age like a long sickness, or else cut off ten years at the latter end of life for one such year of suffering at the beginning. They had been years in which all her powers, moral, physical, and mental, were kept always tuned up to their highest pitch. Any faltering, any flagging, any debilitating self-pity, any yearning for compassion, must have ruined her. To maintain her difficult position it was necessary she should be always self-possessed and calm. Her safety lay in the conflict and variety of her cares. One lonely grief, though small, is more difficult to bear than a variety of great ones which serve to check each other; that is, to a temperament like Amabel's, capable even beyond its strength of great exertions, but fond of brooding in inaction when not sufficiently aroused.

Her dress was black, of ordinary material, but fashioned with a French simplicity of taste, for it was the work of her own hands. The glow, the bloom, the sparkle of her youth had passed away. Scarcely any trace remained of the bright face, so round, so soft, so fresh in early girlhood; as little too was left of the young wife, more pale, more timid, less self-confident; tender and confiding if trusted—pettish and resentful if ill-used. It was her picture drawn in chalks not long after this period to which I have already alluded in the introduction. "Beautiful, young, but with the marks of early sorrow in her face. An expression which fascinated rather than repelled, which made you feel that nothing that grieved you could be too trivial for her to sympathize with, and no sorrow so terrible but that she might venture with the right of sad experience to bring it balm."

Her hair was worn quite plain, a fashion then unusual, save

for widows. She had been in the habit of hiding its luxuriance under caps, but that proved too expensive an indulgence, and now the hair put simply back was worn alone.

And her character? What had enabled a naturally sensitive, excitable woman to acquire this calm and quiet manner unaccompanied by severity or affectation?

She owed it partly to having been crushed to the earth by personal suffering, at the time she entered on her present responsibilities; the slights and mortifications then inflicted by Olivia failed to give pain to feelings benumbed and deadened by repeated blows.

She had found Captain Talbot when she reached him from S——, eager to see her. He drew her towards him the moment that she arrived, and whispered in his now imperfect speech, "It is all gone—all your fortune"—and then he wept and whimpered like a child.

What was poor Amabel to do? Where turn in the midst of such disaster? Should she—her pride and inclination both prompted her to this—at once seek employment for herself, and cease to be a burden upon the little property of the family? But duty urged her to remain. Poor Captain Talbot would cling fast to her skirts as she stood beside his bed, and repeat over and over again, "Stay here—stay here." He had a sort of vague impression that if she shared their pitance he should not have wronged and ruined her. And her sense of duty cried remain. Remain, even though taunted by Olivia as a beggar and intruder. Remain for the sake of those young children—remain for the sake of that poor step-father, whose life is now so valuable to his family even in a pecuniary point of view. Thus there devolved on her—on *her*—inexperienced, single-handed, unloved, unwelcomed, and alone, the care of this feeble paralytic—that of two young children, Ned about nine years old, and Joseph six, whose education and future prospects had to be provided for, together with the charge of Annie now thirteen, and the ungrateful responsibility of directing Olivia. To meet the expenses of the family she had absolutely *nothing* but Captain Talbot's half-pay of ten and sixpence *per diem*. Olivia had had in infancy a small

legacy left her by a god-father payable upon her coming of age, when it would be about £4,000; but this, of course, was not available.

With an energy and judgment not to have been expected from one so inexperienced, she set herself to make future arrangements for the family, to give up the house and furniture for the benefit of the creditors of Captain Talbot, and to seek another home. In vain Olivia taunted her, slighted her, treated her as an intruder.

She heard, but seemed to hear in vain,
Insensible as steel,
If aught was felt,—'twas only pain
To find she could not feel.

She had no time to indulge in melancholy imaginations, and her position soon became to her a stern, a terrible—yet an accepted reality. This, probably, saved her from much suffering. When we can bring our mind to realize our fate, and start afresh in life from the point at which we stand, we have acquired a sort of power over our own destiny.

It is a sad mistake to think that in this life there is but one love. Here was a woman, the love of whose heart was now given wholly to a man whom she could never hope to see again—whom she had not understood—appreciated—nor knew she loved, while happiness with him was in her power. It was a real love, though surrounded by an aureole of the imagination. And now, she was beginning life anew; but He, who will not make our burden greater than we have strength to bear, was providing for her objects of interest and of affection. She might have closed her heart, as many of us do, nursing with jealous care our own peculiar sorrow; but her sorrow was so real, and so accepted, that there was no fear it would evaporate, if not daily fed and cherished. She was happy to be made sometimes to forget it, and very ready to do all in her power, to be loving and beloved.

She resolved, at once, to move away from the neighborhood where they were known, partly upon her own account, and partly to avoid meeting creditors, who had suffered by the bankruptcy of her step-father. Olivia violently objected to her

plans of strict seclusion, and many very bitter hours did the elder sister pass, endeavoring to determine whether the fortunes of the family ought, in justice, to be sacrificed to Olivia. It was a painful task, because she had, in fact, supplanted her as mistress of the household, and she felt a peculiar responsibility in having the welfare and direction of that unhappy girl placed in her hands.

She determined, however, on taking this small cottage, which had been once recommended to her by the Vicar. It stood close to a farm-house, on a sort of high sand bluff, near the village of Sandrock, on the edge of the broad heath country of Hampshire and Surrey. It was about twelve or fifteen miles from the scene of her late retirement, but the cross roads between Sandrock and S—— were so impassable, being for many miles merely rough wagon tracks over the moorland, that the two villages were nearly as much separated as Cornwall from Yorkshire. They had been residents here over a year, and though every night when she lay down to sleep something was added to her load, it was nevertheless, perhaps, the least sensibly unhappy year that she had passed since the death of Felix Guiscard, and her removal from Malta.

"Amabel," said Annie Talbot, "the new visitor has come down to the Hill Farm."

"Lieutenant Theodosius Ord," said Ned. "I met him just now, with Bevis in his tax-cart, coming over from the town; and Horace told me to say, he should have come round, Amabel, to see you, had he not felt it incumbent upon him to stay at home and see his cousin."

She was standing on the hearth, with her back towards them, and Horace's white rosebud in her hand. Edward thought he saw her kiss it lightly, and there glistened on its leaves a dewdrop or a tear.

"Come, Ned," she said, after having rebuilt the fire of peat, stroked back her step-father's white hair, and pressed a kiss upon his forehead. And she went up stairs once more to little Joe's sick chamber, taking Edward by the hand.

CHAPTER II.

Oh ! if they knew and considered, unhappy ones !—oh ! could they see, could
 But for a moment discern how the blood of true gallantry kindles—
 How the old knightly religion, the chivalry semi-quixotic
 Stirs in the veins of a man at seeing some delicate woman
 Serving him—toiling—for him and the world ; some tenderest girl now
 Over-weighted, expectant of him, is it ?—who shall if only
 Duly her burden be lightened—not wholly removed from her, mind you,
 Lightened if but by the love, the devotion man only can offer,
 Grand on her pedestal rise, as urn-bearing statue of Hellas.

The Bothie of Toper na Fuorich. CLOUGH.

THE Hill Farm, mentioned by Ned Talbot, was beautifully situated on the brow of a hill, about a mile from the Talbots' cottage. It belonged to Horace Vane, a youth whose father was head of the great banking-house in India, of Vane, Chetney, and Vane. The farm had been left to Horace by his mother, who was dead. She was my father's aunt, the sister of the Rev. George Ord, my grandfather ; so that Horace and my father were first cousins. The farm is now turned into a handsome house. At the time of which I write it was a farm of the better class, in which two or three rooms had been fitted up for the residence of Horace and his tutor.

I can give no impartial description of the latter. I knew him in my youth, and if ever there was a man I hated it was Bevis. I never knew whether I disliked him most when his manners were in full dress and sanctimonious, or when they were familiar and *en negligé*. Even as a little child, nothing would have tempted me to stay in the room alone with him, or kiss him ; he had, even with us children, such an unpleasantly familiar way.

Horace was a youth nearly eighteen ; very handsome, with a profusion of dark hair more luxuriant than fine. His nose and mouth were exquisitely formed. His smile was charming. On his upper lip there was a slight dark down. His figure was a little too *embonpoint* for his age, the result of taking little or

no exercise. His eyes were blue, shaded with soft dark lashes.
But

Though clear
To outward view of blemish or of spot,
Bereft of light, their seeing had forgot.
Nor to their idle orbs did sight appear
Of sun, or moon, or star throughout the year,
Or man or woman.

Two years before he had been struggling for the position of head boy in the sixth form of a great school; was a lad of the highest promise, an only son, heir to great wealth, with brilliant prospects, the petted child of fortune. He was spending the Christmas holidays with a school-mate, his friend and rival. The friend insisted one bright morning on having a day's shooting. Horace reluctantly threw down the unfinished novel he was never to look into again. They had crossed their first field, and were getting over a stile, when the gun of the friend accidentally went off. About thirty shot lodged in the head and face of Horace. Assistance was procured; he was carried to the house; the most distinguished oculists were called from town. They came only to repeat that hope was vain.

Since his blindness he had shunned the world, and Bevis had been placed with him as tutor and companion. A mother would have been drawn nearer to her son by his misfortune, a crowd of sympathies would have been awakened between them. But the mercantile father in India grew afraid of Horace after his affliction. What could he do with a blind son? He pitied himself for the wreck of his ambition.

My father had not seen this cousin since he became blind; but having been requested in a letter from the father, Mr. Vane, to visit him, he made an offer of coming down to the Hill Farm for a few weeks on his return from a long cruise in the Magician.

He got up by daybreak on the morning after his arrival, and took an early stroll around the neighborhood in search of a trout stream. He was struck with the peculiar nature of the country, so sombre on the moorland, so smiling in the valley. The cottages were placed so far apart as to be scarcely neigh-

borly, and were generally built upon the edge of the heath to secure facilities for peat digging. The peasants whom he met, clad in green smocks, were far from prepossessing—of the earth, earthy—scarcely superior, save in powers of mischief, to the beasts under their care.

“Mr. Bevis,” he said, during breakfast, “have you any society about here? Anybody living in any hall, or great house in the village? Any clergyman’s family?”

“We have an old clergyman and an old wife—their united ages are one hundred and twenty-five; but you may see to-night all the society we can rake and scrape in Sandrock, or its neighborhood, for these old folks have been so obliging as to ask us to a party.”

“Are there likely to be any pretty girls there?” said my father.

“By Jove! I should think not!” replied the other. “Yet, stay—do you see that cottage on the top of the high sand-cliff?—there is a handsome woman lives there—a mysterious lady!”

“How so? how came she here?” said my father.

“It was a small place, and out of repair. A man built it for himself, and found it was too lonely; so he let it cheap to a Captain Talbot, of your service, who has had a stroke of paralysis, and has nothing but his half-pay on which to support a large family, one member of which is this person. She is very pretty; she dresses in black, and passes for a widow. The girls say she is their sister, but they are mysteriously uncommunicative about her.”

“What is her name?” said my father; “what do you call her?”

“There was the difficulty. Amabel is her Christian name, and it was long before we heard of any other. Some people, speaking of her, used to say Miss Talbot, some Mrs. Talbot, some Mrs. Bell; but she gave herself out at length to be a Mrs. Leonard.”

“How very strange! Do people visit her?”

“There is no visiting in this retired district. I call there, of course, to see the Captain, and I cannot keep Horace away.”

“An anomalous person of that kind must be very disagree-

able in so small a society," began my father. As he was saying this, he caught sight of the face of Horace, who, habitually late for breakfast, was just opening the door. Bevis observed it too, and dropping the subject of Amabel, at once made some remarks about the aspect of the country, and the prospects of the weather.

No sooner was breakfast done, than Horace dragged his cousin by the arm upon the terrace, overlooking many miles of cultivated meadow-land and heath, and asked him, with some vehemence, what Bevis had been telling him.

"He was speaking of Mrs. Leonard when I came in," said he; "I know by the tone of his voice he was speaking of Mrs. Leonard."

"Why, yes," said my father, smiling, "he did mention that mysterious lady. I should consider any person of that sort no advantage to the neighborhood."

"Of that sort!" said Horace, fiercely; "Bevis shows himself the villain—the scoundrel—the liar, that he is, if he has dared to breathe a word against that angel—I tell you what it is," he continued, "Bevis wants to be revenged. There is no love lost between them, I can tell him. He made love to her when she first came here, but since he found it would not do, he has lost no opportunity of slandering and annoying her. He pays court to Olivia Talbot under her very eyes, and says when Amabel opposes his visits, it is from *jealousy*."

"But, Horace, small as your experience of the world has been, you must own that the position of this woman is equivocal, which no woman's position can be, unless something is wrong."

"Wait till you see her," exclaimed Horace. "See her yourself, Theo. See how nobly she sustains herself in her trying situation; see how she awes Bevis; see her with that hateful girl he flirts with. Or see her with the poor, or with her paralysed old father, or the children, or talk to her yourself—just let her get over you the least influence—"

"Why, Horace, my dear fellow, she is getting an influence over you, I perceive," said my father.

"An influence! I should think so! An influence! It does

me more good to sit an hour at her side, than all the sermons Dr. Frost ever knocked out of his red cushion. To see such an example of suffering patience, of the beauty of holiness, sweetens the heart, and mine was full of bitterness before I knew her."

"My dear cousin," began my father, "I have no doubt she is a woman of great art."

But Horace did not hear him.

"I feel as if, now that I have known her, my life had a motive. Life, since my blindness, has had little to offer me; but, I shall not have lived in vain, if I can do something to lighten her burdens. I am living *for her*—living in the hope that some day I may do something to make her happier,—something to serve her—something—were it only to make her feel that there is somebody to care for—and admire—and sympathize with her. That helps—a thought of that kind *helps*, you know. But, Theodosius," here he changed his tone, "there is so little I can do by reason of my blindness. She leads a hard life here. I thought that you would be her friend—would protect her from my tutor. I do what I can; but, sometimes my blood boils to find I cannot aid her, and if I had not a little self-command, for her sake, I should knock him down."

"The poor woman shall have fair play, as far as I have any influence," said my father. "But, Horace,"

"Hush!" exclaimed Horace, laying his finger on his lips, for he heard the step of Bevis coming towards them.

Very much disturbed for his young cousin's sake, by all he had been hearing, my father sauntered forth alone, amidst the highways and the hedges. It must be allowed—indeed, it has been said, that my father had in his disposition an undue allowance of the love of approbation. The impression that he made on others, was always a consideration with him. On the present occasion, when he thought of Horace, he was clearly of the opinion that the poor fellow had been getting strangely duped by a woman of equivocal character, and, possibly, of very considerable powers of mind. But, when he remembered Horace's wish that he should know and aid her, a degree of

complacency entered into his contemplations. He, a man three-and-twenty years of age, was better fitted than a youth like Horace, for intercourse with such a person. He stood in no danger from her arts, or her position. He even might, perhaps, be of essential use to her. So thinking, he walked, rod in hand, along the winding banks of the small river that has a name upon our maps, but is no broader than a trout stream. On its banks, fishing patiently for minnows, at a spot opposite that part of the high sand cliff where the martins have a colony, sat a small boy with a rude rod made out of a hop-pole. My father sauntered up to him to ask some questions about the stream, and the kind of fish in it.

"Minnows, gudgeon, perch, bream, and occasionally a pike," was the answer. "Such a one," pursued the boy, "as old farmer Cæsar caught a year ago about here. Amabel said, that if we had lived in a less out of the way spot, it would have gone into the paper."

My father perceived that the boy was handsome, and evidently a gentleman's son.

"And who is Amabel?" he said, throwing his line into the water.

"Amabel is my sister."

"A favorite sister?" said my father, hesitating, however, to question him.

"Oh! I am very—very fond of her," said Ned. "Everybody is, except Mr. Bevis and Olivia."

"Ah! indeed," said my father, pondering this reply, or intent upon his fishing.

"Hurra!" cried Ned, "you have a bite! Haul him in—haul him in, sir!"

My father was on his feet at once. The fish was large, and strained the slender line; he let it out to give him play. Away darted the fish down the stream, Ned and my father after it; till after a run of about two hundred yards along the winding banks of the moat-like little river, the prize, exhausted, allowed himself to be hauled in opposite a small garden, with terraces scooped out of the cliff, sloping down to the water's edge, with a rustic seat and bower immediately upon the bank of the river.

"That is Amabel," said Ned, "and there's my father."

Theodosius looked up from the large pike he had been landing. On the opposite bank of the river, in the rustic seat, sat an old and feeble man, attended by a graceful woman, dressed in black; no longer in the fresh bloom of girlhood, but with that kind of beauty which makes its appeal to our sympathy.

It was not to be expected he should recognise her. He had seen her figure only at Foxley, on that night when he and Captain Warner watched the declaration of Ferdinand through the window of the conservatory.

"Sister, look here, what a one Lieut. Ord has caught," shouted Ned across the water. "It's as big as the one Tom Cæsar got. See here!"

Snatching up the fish, he set his foot upon an iron chain, hung slack across the stream, to mark the boundary of the fishing privileges of the property; and, with the help of the long hop-pole, scrambled across the river.

"Edward, don't!" cried Amabel, "don't, Ned, pray, don't. Prevent him, Mr. Ord."

She colored to the eyes, as she addressed him. But it was too late to stop the daring boy; he and the pike were safe across the water.

"We will have this with wine sauce, my dear," cried the old man. "Port wine sauce. You can teach Sarah to dress it. I think a pike very good eating—a little fish is a treat to me, now."

"Hush, father;—Ned did not catch the pike; it belongs to Mr. Ord."

"I hope, madam, you will do me the honor of accepting it," said my father, who, the river not being at that spot ten feet in width, distinctly heard the conversation.

"And Amabel," said Capt. Talbot, "ask him to come and dine."

"My father hopes, sir, you will come to-morrow and help us eat your fish," said Amabel.

My father assented.

"Are you going to fish any more, Mr. Ord?" said Ned.

"I shall try my luck again, if I am not a trespasser."

"Certainly not," said Amabel. "Our fish is not preserved."

"There is better fishing," said the old man, "in the heath ponds."

"Yes, Mr. Ord, I can show you, sir. Amabel, may I go with Mr. Ord?" cried Ned.

"Provided Mr. Ord will not object to looking after you. I shall be much obliged to you, Mr. Ord," she said, on receiving his assurance that he would take care of little Pickle. "His brother Joe is ill in bed, and to-day I have no time to see after his studies."

CHAPTER III.

But when the days of golden dreams had perished,
And e'en despair seemed powerless to destroy,
Then did I learn how existence could be cherished,
Strengthened and fed without the aid of joy.

ELLIS BELL.

At an early hour in the evening—an hour at which no fashionable individual will confess that he has dined, Bevis, Horace, and my father walked from the Hill Farm to the parsonage: the latter very smart, wearing new white kid gloves.

The parsonage was one wing of an old convent, owing its present picturesque effect, not to any original architectural beauty, but to the tooth of time and the growth of ivy. It was an uncomfortable residence enough, ill arranged and very draughty, with a neat little modern flower-garden in front, and with a view of the churchyard behind. The living was a very poor one, a few acres of glebe land scarcely fit for cultivation, £80 a year, and the right of cutting turf from the neighboring common. The population of the parish was scattered. The village might have contained a couple of hundred inhabitants, and rather more than an equal number of other parishioners were dispersed over an area of heath country ten miles broad by four and a half long. These people were many of them clustered in small hamlets, wherever a spring of water, or a

patch of better land on an edge of the common seemed to invite a settlement. It was impossible for the majority of these persons ever to attend the church, and nearly equally impossible for the clergyman to become acquainted with their wants, even had he been in the prime of life, and an active man. But, Dr. Frost was "in years," as his people expressed it; very corpulent, and at no time very active. He found it impossible even with the help of his broad gauge tax-cart and fat pony, to keep a proper pastoral supervision over the flock confided to him. In consequence of which praying tailors and preaching weavers troubled the outskirts of his parish, and the cause of dissent gained ground there. To the day of his death I don't believe Dr. Frost ever attributed this defection to the right cause.

Nearer at home worse evils than dissent made their appearance, even in the village. Very early marriages had become the fashion amongst the peasantry; and every description of evil was the result. The boy and girl united at fifteen, found, together with the cares of an increasing family, a great want of mutual assimilation. In no parish were wives more brutally beaten, conjugal infidelities more frequent, or female honor less secure. The doctor attributed all these evils to dissent, and continued conscientiously to preach very dry sermons, in a very cold church, in which "our venerable establishment" figured amidst exhortations against heresy, Atheism, Popery, and schism.

When Amabel came into the village, she found that by reason of Dr. and Mrs. Frost's infirmities, there was plenty of work for her to do. She was anything but one of those officious ladies who seek to govern all things in a parish—priest, churchwardens, and people. Had there been any opposition offered to her efforts, I am afraid, so meek-spirited was she in the service of the public at that period, that her pretensions to do good would have been humbly withdrawn. But encouraged by the advice of the Vicar of S——, from whom she brought a letter of introduction to Dr. Frost, she became in some sort a lay curate to the doctor. She went about from house to house, making herself familiar with the character of the inhabitants, administering, as far as she was able, to their wants, and whenever the case was urgent, bringing it to the

notice of the Rector. Never had that ecclesiastic found his clerical character so looked up to in his parish, never before had he taken so much interest in his people.

In return Dr. Frost undertook to give Edward a daily lesson in Latin. The labor of this instruction fell chiefly upon Amabel, who was careful to cause the task to be well studied. But with all this, it was a great assistance to her to have a superior authority out of her own circle for whom the daily lesson must be prepared.

How she accomplished all this, her home, her parish, and her scholastic duties, I confess myself unable to understand. She herself, when questioned on the subject, said she must have broken down at every point, had she permitted any press of business to interfere with her habit of walking alone. Two hours a day she cast off the cares of home, and with Barba and a rough Newfoundland puppy crossed the heath in all directions, breathing the fresh free air of the moorland, the object of each walk being generally a mission of love to some poor cottage.

Bevis, Horace, and my father reached Dr. Frost's parsonage before the Talbots arrived. The old tax-cart and the asthmatic pony had been sent to bring the captain, and the family came together into the room; Ned, Annie, and Olivia having walked by a short cut, while Amabel and her step-father in the doctor's cart, came round by the road. Amabel was dressed in black, with a white rose in her bosom.

There were present two Miss Peytons from the Holt, the daughters of the Ranger; a young curate from the next parish, and several of the sons and daughters of the better class of farmers.

My father watched Amabel. He noticed that the greetings she exchanged with Dr. and Mrs. Frost were very cordial, and that she drew the former aside and entered into animated discourse with him. Hovering round a table on which books were spread, he caught occasional fragments of their earnest conversation.

"I am the last woman in the world to favor the separation

of man and wife," she said, "still there might be occasions. . . . I wanted your advice before I gave my own, doctor."

Here the doctor being called off by his wife, my father quitted the old albums, and with a sort of awkward hesitation, asked leave of Amabel to renew his acquaintance with her. Her manner was embarrassed, and after expressing a polite pleasure in meeting him that evening, the conversation came to a full stop.

"You seem *au fait* at the business of the parish," said my father, blurring out in desperation the thought that was uppermost in his mind.

Amabel looked a little uncomfortable. "If you have heard any of my conversation with Dr. Frost," she said, "I fear it may have given you a wrong idea of my opinions. I brought him a case of conscience. There is a couple in this parish, where conjugal felicity is extremely rare, who have led a cat and dog life to the scandal of the neighborhood. The man has lately received encouragement to join a brother in one of the midland counties, and his wife, who is a capable woman, has the promise of a place. 'To be or not to be, that is the question.' Shall I counsel the separation? What advice do you give me, Mr. Ord?"

"I should say," said my father, "that the sooner they parted company the better."

"You think, then," she replied, "that a temporary separation of husband and wife may teach a lesson of forbearance, which, in an inflamed state of their relations, they are not likely to learn? You may be right. Everything that now goes wrong with either, is attributed by the wife to the husband, by the husband to the wife."

"Mr. Ord, will you take a partner for the next dance?" said old Mrs. Frost, bustling up to him. "My dear, will your good father play his rub?"

Amabel walked up to the card-table, and took her seat beside the captain. He loved to hold a hand at whist, and to play his cards by her direction.

Meantime, Mrs. Frost rattled wonderful tunes out of her old piano. Set quadrilles had then lately been introduced into

England: not quadrilles such as we now dance them, monotonous and constitutional, but quadrilles of *anarchy*. Quadrilles with *pousset* at the corners, right hand and left all round, ladies' chain, and *mouliné des dames*.

As soon as the rubber ended, Captain Talbot rose; and, taking his step-daughter's chair, placidly contented himself with looking on. Amabel at once offered to relieve Mrs. Frost at the piano. She was not a great musical performer, but she played quadrille music in perfect time, with indefatigable good humor. Horace sat by the piano, and, at intervals, they exchanged a few words. My father, not so well accustomed as the rest of the *corps de ballet* to make use of her musical exertions, came up at last, and asked if she were tired.

For some time she had had a flagging look, and her hands trembled.

"I am not easily tired," she answered evasively, with a smile. "I am no skilful performer, and I consider it my vocation to be a useful one."

Here Horace, who had exhibited symptoms of uneasiness, drew his cousin aside. "Don't you see she is tired to death?" said he. "Ask one of the Miss Peytons. They play well enough to dance by. Either of them will play, if you ask her."

Acting on this hint, my father placed at the piano his late partner, and then, turning to Amabel, invited her to dance a quadrille.

"Yes, Amabel, we want a *vis-à-vis*. Here," said Olivia, "opposite to me."

"Have you been long in this part of the country?" said my father, when the side couples were performing the first figure.

"Long enough to get sincerely attached to its strange, wild, moorland scenery. I suppose, as you came down, its desolation surprised you. In winter, the cold is intense. Were it not for the abundance of peat, we could hardly live here."

"Do not you find the people stupid and debased? I can hardly understand their speech," continued my father.

"I had acquired very considerable familiarity with their character and rural dialect during the year before we came here."

"Were you living in this neighborhood?"

"About fifteen miles from here, at S——. Have you been long ashore?"

"Only a few weeks," he replied. "I am just come home from the Mediterranean."

"From cruising in what ship?" she said, making a *balancez*.

"The Magician frigate," he answered, turning her round.

("Gentlemen, change partners," Miss Peyton cried.)

"Has the Magician come home?" said Amabel.

"No; she stays abroad a year longer."

"Did you have a pleasant cruise?"

"Very. We were on a crack station."

"A pleasant cruise, depends, I suppose, less on the cruising ground than the officers and Captain."

(*Pousset again.*)

"I had sailed with Captain Warner before. He is my cousin," said my father. "This time I had little to say to him. He was sadder, quieter, and less genial than usual."

"Sadder; quieter; less genial," she repeated, dwelling upon the words. "Was his health impaired?"

"No—but,"

"But?—What were you going to say?"

("Forward and back—cross over.") Amabel and my father performed their parts in the quadrille, and returned to their places.

"Don't spare me," she said, in a low voice. "What were you going to say?"

"That Capt. Warner's wife fell under suspicion; and as he is a man of quick feelings, it seemed almost impossible for him to rally from his distress of mind."

("Balancez. Forward. Turn your vis-à-vis. Demie queue de chat.")

It was fortunate for Amabel she was called to dance. Her cheeks flushed,

And troubled blood through her pale face was seen
To come and goe with tidings from the heart,
As it a running messenger had been.

Tears gathered in her eyes. It was all she could do on rejoining her partner, to resume the conversation.

"Are you sure that you have not judged her harshly? It is so difficult to know the truth. Many a true woman (I speak from my experience) has been put by circumstances so much in the wrong."

"I cannot judge for you, unless"

"Do not let us talk of *myself*. Let us continue the conversation on the subject of Mrs. Warner. In this very Byron controversy, which is shaking Europe from one end to the other, how quick we are to judge—how little can we, any of us, know of the personal affinities of the married pair or the real progress of the quarrel."

"I wish the woman who wronged my cousin, could see him pacing his own quarter-deck of an evening. If she ever had a spark of love for him, his listless melancholy face would be punishment enough for her," was my father's reply.

Amabel returned to the charge. "I see," she said, "you are determined to condemn her; and that she may be guilty, I have no disposition to deny. But, is your idea of the sanctity of the marriage vow so limited that you will not admit any notion of its breach, short of what society has pronounced the unpardonable sin?"

At this moment the company was summoned round the sandwich tray. Amabel and her partner were forced to join the others. Their conversation passed to more general topics. He asked her about Scott and Byron, and at length even confessed that he himself wrote verses, and had brought down to the Hill Farm a MS. volume, nearly complete, something after the order of the "Hours of Idleness." Emboldened by her ready sympathy, and her evident appreciation of poetry, he ventured to hope that he might be permitted to submit to her some of those verses.

She had, as I have elsewhere said, a beautiful intuition of sympathy, which won her almost at once the confidence of those brought into contact with her. She that night fixed a spell upon my father; and no doubt some of my readers would be glad to learn at secondhand, the magic secret of her power.

I regret I cannot gratify them. This winsome art of inviting confidence is the pearl of gifts in the bestowal of such fairy friends as shower presents on the infant pillow.

There is an incalculable influence in interest, there is a charm conveyed by manner, there is a personal potency in presence more powerful than mere eloquence of words.

My father talked to her of his verses and his hopes; she entered into his feelings; she returned him his own thoughts enriched in their transit through her mind; she made him feel that all he was saying had to her a living interest, and he did not quit her side till he put her into the tax-cart with Captain Talbot. He then walked home in the bright light of a full moon, with Horace, Bevis, Ned, Annie, and Olivia. The coarse flirtation of the latter with the tutor, inexpressibly disgusted him. He had been wandering in purer, higher realms of thought, and the conversation around him brought him down to earth again. He began thinking over his own verses. He meditated on what favorable specimens of his muse he should submit to her consideration. He was so eager to secure her good opinion of his verses, that he could hardly bear the delay that must ensue before her verdict for or against their committal to the press, could be secured.

He lagged behind, repeating to himself select fragments of his poetry, and particularly two stanzas written several days before. He was so pleased with the effect, on repetition, that he took out his pencil, and leaning against one of the posts of the footbridge that spans the little river, copied down the stanzas on the back of an old letter.

"Give it me!" cried Olivia, as he rejoined the party. "This horrid man declares you are a poet, and have been writing verses to the moon. Give them to me! I want them for my album."

"It is not for you, Miss Talbot," said my father, putting the paper into Amabel's hand. She was standing in the road, before the cottage.

"I have copied down this little thing," he said. "I wrote it the other day. Perhaps you will look at it. It was suggested by a few words in a letter from my Captain. It bears a little

upon one of the subjects we were speaking of this evening. There is a line or two in it which, perhaps, you may find rather powerful."

"I shall have time to ponder it to-night," she said. "Our youngest boy is ill, and I am going to sit up with him."

* * * * *

"*Rather powerful!*" Forgive me, my dear father—you well know how fondly I have always loved you, how every word of your wisdom has sunk into your daughter's heart, how highly I estimate your rare good sense, your cultivated faculties, your genial powers of appreciation, but . . . I cannot, here or elsewhere, pay my tribute to your muse. Amabel herself said, when I questioned her upon the subject, that in the days in which you chiefly wrote, society was afflicted with a flux of rhyme. That every encouragement was given to the production of *bosh* in the Annuals, Poets' Corners, and Ladies' Albums then in fashion. That every lady invoked the spirit of Letitia Elizabeth Landon, and every collegian, remembering that Lord Byron's fame and genius grew like the bean stalk, in one night, planted his little bean. She agreed in what I ventured to remark, that "ideas are now shoving mere rhyme out of the verse-market, and that poetry is a luxury to be had *good* or not at all;" yet remarked, that she was sorry you had ceased to write. She thought it was *our* fault—Edward's and mine. She had observed you had never been prolific in verse, since the day you found your solemn ode on the March of the British Army to Cabul, covered with the mock heroic illustrations in gay paint we had daubed upon the margin.

CHAPTER IV.

Je ne sais pas si j'aimais cette dame.
 Mais je sais bien,
 Que pour avoir un regard de son âme,
 Moi pauvre chien !
 J'aurais gaiment passé dix ans au baigne
 Sous le verree. VICTOR HUGO. *Gutture.*

"RATHER powerful," said my father, and rejoined Horace and his tutor. The former was not entirely at his ease, but Bevis with a coarse laugh slapped my father on the back, and complimented him on having made such progress in intimacy with a lady who had generally more pride than she could afford to keep in her position.

"Give us your receipt, old boy. Her head is set remarkably well upon her shoulders, and if she were a trifle plumper in the bust, her figure would be fine."

My father drew back disgusted. Horace seized his arm.

"I confess I am astonished, Theodosius," said he. "She is generally very reserved with strangers. You must not believe one word of what Bevis tells you. He is a good-for-nothing scoundrel; piqued and jealous."

On reaching his own room at the Hill Farm, my father took out of his portfolio all his poetical effusions; read them over; re-copied them, blotted, and altered. Putting himself in her place as it were, he calculated the effect each word was likely to produce on her. Whoever has known anything of the pleasures of composition, knows that when really worked up to composing pitch, the poet is under the influence of a kind of mental intoxication; and like any other toper, pays for his night's excess by miserable reaction, and by utter disgust at the heel-taps of the bumpers quaffed sparkling over night from the Castalian spring.

He was excited and disquieted. He could hardly interpret his emotion. A golden glory seemed to circle the whole earth.

His life had been hitherto (so far as the sympathies and the affections were concerned), like a waste howling wilderness, parched and bare; a wellspring of gladness had gushed up in its midst, and there was a sound of abundance of rain. This feeling communicated its sympathy to his frame. He bared his breast to the night wind, and breathed free draughts of the pure air scented with heather.

At a distance in the moonlight the tower of the village church was faintly visible; underneath it, a mere mass of shadow, stood the parsonage; in it the room where she had been. It was holy ground in his sight; as in eastern lands they hallow the spots once pressed according to tradition by the footsteps of an angel. The mill stream with its murmur spoke also of her; of the little boy, her brother, and the garden where he had seen her; and further off upon the sand-cliff the lights of her cottage were gleaming still.

He opened wide the casement, and sprang out into the night—her light his beacon. He rendered himself no account of the strange interest he felt. He found his way down to the river. He lingered on the mill bridge, soothed by the sound of rushing waters. He crossed the bridge, and made his way along the river's edge until he reached her garden. He thought that he should like to stand upon the spot beside the rustic seat where she had stood. He lingered there but a few moments, and then, as from that position he could not see the light shining from the window of the room where his heart told him that she must be, he climbed the stone steps of the terrace. At the top was a very low wall covered with ivy, separating the garden from a narrow lawn. Suddenly he paused, and stooped behind the wall. A white figure made its appearance at the lighted window, and looked out upon the night. There was a passing and repassing of shadows as if other persons were moving in the chamber. In truth, an old woman of the village, whom Amabel had hired to assist her in her watch, having slept during the early part of the night, had risen at two o'clock to take her place by little Joseph's bed. Soon all was once more still within the house, and my father was just about to issue from his concealment, when a door

half covered by an ivy porch was opened, and Amabel herself came out upon the lawn. A large white shawl—a cashmere shawl, one of the wedding gifts of Captain Warner, was thrown over her dress, her dark hair was put up as it had been during the evening, and Horace's white rose was still in her bosom. She seemed to be in a state of the greatest excitement, and to have come out into the open air to calm herself by the soothing influences of the night. In the bright moonlight of the early summer night he could see her eyes gleam.

She walked up and down the short lawn, moving her arms, and clasping her hands nervously; with an occasional ejaculation, such as: "Father in Heaven, have mercy on me! Let this long trial now be over. I thank Thee, O my God, for this new hope!"

These words, and such as these, my father heard at intervals, without knowing at all what meaning to put on them.

Suddenly she stopped near him and repeated his own verses. Her voice was thrilling, and yet very sweet. Never had poetry sounded so musically in his ears. It was all he could do to restrain himself from starting up almost beneath her feet, and terrifying her by some vehement outburst of admiration.

She repeated his lines again—this time with *une larme dans la voix*, and her emotion touched the poet's heart, and made her still more dear.

The lines that he had given her, called forth by some words in a letter from Captain Warner, had been selected merely because they were fresh in his memory, having been recently written, and were, as I have said, part of a favorite copy of verses. Every author knows the tit-bits of his own literature. But they were well calculated to afford nourishment to a dear delusion. She had never been able to persuade herself that she had made no impression on her husband by her letter. For long months after her baby's death, she continued to expect an answer, and when that hope was given up another hope was born. She thought he would come back, inquire into the truth of all that she had said, seek her out in her retreat, forgive her, bless her, and restore her to her old position. But the war was over. Waterloo had long been fought. The ships

employed were ordered home. She knew he could have relinquished his command, had he desired it. Nearly three years since they parted had now passed, but still she would not listen to that inner voice which said, "*Lasciate la speranza.*"

Suddenly the arrival of Theodosius Ord, her husband's cousin, his lieutenant, his second at Foxley, revived her drooping hopes, and quickened into certainty her expectation. It did not occur to her that he might possibly not recognise her; that he had seen her but once, and then hardly could be said to have seen her in the dim light of the conservatory at Foxley. It did not occur to her, that, not having been in England when she married, but having heard of her repeatedly in Malta, he only knew her as Miss Belle Karnac, and was so entirely ignorant of her English connexion, that, had any suspicions crossed his mind, he would have been thrown off the scent by her relationship with the Talbots.

She believed he was the Ambassador Extraordinary of her husband, sent to make a report upon her life and her position. She believed that Captain Warner, moved by her representations, was disposed to raise her from the dust, and had sent Theodosius before him, crying "Repent, for the hour of forgiveness is at hand." Every word said by my father on that night, had strengthened the conviction. His eager attentions to herself, his interest in her concerns, the scarcely civil curiosity with which he pressed inquiry, were gladly welcomed as the grounds of hope, while she determined carefully to avoid any direct betrayal of her real name and position, remembering but too well her husband's last appeal to her. But, these proofs of my father's mission were corroborated, strengthened, and surpassed by the nature of the verses he had given her.

Wife! does no memory haunt thee even now
Of that sad day—accursed let it be!—
When I exchanged for thine unhallowed vow
My name—dishonored now—*dishonored!*—and by thee?

Woman! does soft repentance never come—
No brief compassion for the exile, driven
From the lone roof of a dishonored home—
A home that might—O God!—through thee have been a heaven?

No wonder she had sought, in the night air, to cool the fever in her veins, to calm the storm of self-reproach, of pity, admiration, tenderness, and love, that raged within her. Oh! how her heart went out in her loneliness to him who had held out to her his golden sceptre. How earnestly she desired to appear well in his cousin's eyes. Since she had entered into her stepfather's family, she had been struggling to regain some part of the position, and consideration, and self-respect which she had lost. She had taken up the burden of duty boldly. There had been none to love her, to bid her God speed, or to encourage her. But the fulfilment of her duty awakened new interests in her heart for those around her. True, there were none to appreciate the great struggle of her life, to enter into her higher feelings, but there were some to love her *as they might*. And all her troubles she carried to her God.

I have a friend who has penetrated to the frozen depths of the far North, and has seen the Ice King in his glittering beauty. As she lay in her warm bed, the hoary monarch passed, shrivelling with his icy touch the mercury in the glass, two dozen degrees below the cypher. She has seen him bearded with icicles. Plumes nodded on his head of hemlock boughs, tipped with fresh fallen snows. The raiment that he wore was white and glistening. He walked upon the waters. The rapid river shrank some fathoms out of sight when he smote it with his mantle. All nature wore his livery. He seemed almost a God.—The glory of man in these far, frozen lands, is to prove himself the lord, the superior, the master of Winter. To walk into his very teeth unchilled by his keen breath, and independent of his power. Even thus had Amabel become the mistress of the chill, stern sorrow that controlled her external life. As the northern inhabitant watches winter from the windows of his warm abode, he learns to perceive that the very power that has hidden the loveliness of nature from his sight, has glories of its own. As sunlight falls upon the landscape, every twig of every leafless tree sparkles with crystallines. As he gazes on the buds and blossoms nipped and blighted by the frost, he finds each closely shrined in glittering ice; and shadows have their most glorious beauty when cast by God's own sun-

light on the pure untrodden snow. No winds on such still days of extreme frost bring icy terrors to the fur-clad breast. So in the stern reign of her now fixed and settled sorrow, petty griefs were not brought home to her. She had so strengthened herself by acquiescence, to endure the great reality of grief, that smaller troubles could not harm. She was almost ready even to sport at times with her own sorrow, to find a beauty in the tears she shed, in the blight of her youth's blossoms.

And, on the horizon of such a life, shone on this night the aurora borealis of her fancy. Her imagination gleamed and glistened, and formed new coruscations of strange beauty, and took shapes that had no substance, and sported with the unreal; and, ever and anon, shot up bright gleams of glory to the zenith. High aspirations, holy thoughts, a pure repentance offered up to God.

In this still hour of the summer night, as all these fancies chased each other through her mind, she stood so near my father, that he could almost hear the beating of her heart, and see her tears.

At length, after standing for a few moments in an attitude of prayer, with her hands clasped, and her pale face lifted to the moonlight, she drew the folds of her shawl round her, and went towards the house. As she turned, the white rose in her bosom fell within my father's reach. He watched her with excitement. He feared lest she should miss the flower and return; but, occupied with other thoughts, she did not perceive that she had dropped it, and, without turning her head, disappeared into the cottage. As soon as the door closed on her, my father seized his prize. It had faded a little in its warm, soft nest. It was the dearer for that reason. It was still fragrant. It was a *rose unique*, a rare kind of rose—one only growing on each branch of a small bush during the season, and Horace had nursed it carefully through storm, and frost, and blight, for an offering to her. He had, with pride, perceived she wore it at the Doctor's house! He loved her because everything in life that had to him a value and an interest, lived, and moved, and had its being in her.

When my father reached his chamber, which he entered as

he had quitted it, through the low casement, he clipped the stalk of his rose, determined to prolong its life to the utmost limits of floral existence, and put it into a glass of water before he turned in for the night, when, of course, he dreamed (but his dreams were not the dreams of the first night of his arrival) he was her *preux chevalier*, her true knight and defender, that he had saved her from some peril (what it was, he remembered very vaguely), and that on his knees he had presented her a large pink poppy, which it gave him afterwards incredible uneasiness to discover, was not, as he had imagined it, a rose.

CHAPTER V.

The blessing of her quiet life
Fell on us like the dew,
And good thoughts where her footsteps pressed
Like fairy blossoms grew.—WHITTIER.

THE next morning there was not wanting a pretext to go early to the cottage. He found Amabel giving Edward and Annie their lessons, but she received him with her pleasant smile, especially when he produced *Marmion*, which he offered to read to her.

“It is against all precedent to break into the hours of my school,” she said, “but, indeed, the temptation is irresistible. I never owned the book, and never read it but once. Annie, take your work. Ned, get your drawing. Mr. Ord, excuse my darning in your presence, but we keep but one maid, and these stockings *must* be done. Now, if you will settle yourself in this arm-chair, and put your book upon this stand, I think you will be comfortable.”

Once begun, the attention of the party was entranced, for my father was an admirable reader; but after two hours his voice began to fail, and he laid down the volume at the close of the third canto. For some time before he ended Amabel had been frequently wiping her eyes, and when he closed the

book, instead of thanking him, she did not raise her head. Ned had already slipped through the open window, Annie rose quietly and went for a ball of thread into another chamber. My father sat playing with the leaves of his book, not liking to notice Amabel's agitation. At length she raised her eyes and begged his pardon.

"I am more restless and excitable to-day than I have been for months," she said. "Our conversation of yesterday was very agitating, and I am afraid I have indulged," she added, with a smile, "in too large a dose of poetry."

"Indeed I too have done little but think of our conversation of last evening," he exclaimed, rushing into the subject with an excess of enthusiasm and a lack of penetration.

"And I should wish you to forget it," she replied. "I went further and said more than I find it pleasant to remember. Believe me, I am not usually indiscreet and confidential. There is not one person here to whom I would have said or hinted a tithe of what I said to you."

"Not even to Horace?"

"Certainly not to Horace," she replied. "When I talk to Horace it is of himself, not of myself. You can easily imagine why I speak with you of matters I could never touch upon with Horace."

She rolled up the stockings she was mending as she spoke, and my father moved uneasily upon his chair. At last he said—

"I have been much interested in my cousin Horace."

"And you may well be," Amabel replied. "The steady courage with which he meets misfortune, conscious that he is its master and superior, is a lesson I would gladly lay to heart, and cherish for my own use in despondent times."

"Yet Horace says that he learnt that patient courage, Mrs. Leonard, from you."

It was the first time that he had called her by the name she had assumed; a name that she could never hear without emotion. She colored, and tears gathered in her eyes; but she recovered herself and continued :

"When I first knew Horace, the elements of a noble charac-

ter had not been disciplined; and like the singer whose too powerful voice requires to be brought into subjection, he needed that self-mastery, without which the milder virtues become weaknesses, and the stronger passions."

"Self discipline is then a system of checks and balances?" said my father.

"I find it so," she answered, "and Mr. Bevis is not the man to educe a perfect character out of conflicting elements. I hope that in return for the happiness I have found in the interest inspired by Horace, and his almost filial devotion and affection, I may have been able to do him good."

"A *filial* affection! I have suspected on Horace's part something more."

"More!" she cried.

"Horace at nineteen is a young man. His feelings and his passions strong. I doubt," said my father, "if you are more than four-and-twenty, and you must know the power likely to be exerted over him in the pride of her loveliness by a superior woman!"

"Oh, God!" she exclaimed, shuddering, "how deeply am I yet to drink the cup of humiliation! Mr. Ord, as before heaven I pray you to believe that what you have just said is perfectly new to me, and it gives me more pain than you can imagine. Amidst all the difficulties of my present life, my friendly intercourse with Horace has been my consolation."

Then, after pausing a moment, she exclaimed, "What gave you the idea?"

"Personal observation, and some few words dropped by Bevis."

"By Bevis!" she cried. "That man, Mr. Ord, is my persevering enemy; and knowing him to be such, I have not felt it becoming in me to speak to you as I should otherwise have done to the friend of Horace, of his utter unfitness for his present position. He is a bad man *meanly* bad. Putting his hope in my position, he has dared to insult me by professions, and has never forgiven me his repulse. He is endeavoring at present to annoy me by making love to my young sister Olivia, for whose welfare I am responsible; though her

character places her little under my control. His attentions are well received by her. I cannot prevent or counteract them. I see the thing going on under my own eyes. I know the character of Mr. Bevis, and nothing but the watchful auxiliary aid of Horace has sustained me in the unequal struggle."

"What attractions can a man like Bevis find in Miss Olivia?"

"In the main, I suppose, her prospect of a small fortune. Olivia is beyond my control, and inaccessible to my persuasions. We are only half-sisters, you know. I was placed when very young with the relations of my father, but Olivia, at home, early contrived to gain over her mother the ascendancy which a strong will has over a weak one, and has never, till she found herself under my authority, been subject to any salutary control."

"Oh! that is it," thought my father. "So the mother died young, and Capt. Talbot married again—children of the same father by different women. She is very fond of the father, I perceive." Then, he said aloud, "You undertook a very great responsibility, when you took the direction of your father's family."

"Very great, indeed; but I had no one to advise me. What could I do? Alone in the world, without any other domestic ties, this call appeared to me a call from Heaven. It gave me new interests in life—it gave me a vocation." Then, after a pause, "I cannot believe what you tell me about Horace. It has agitated me more than you can conceive. Cannot *you* tell Horace how vain, how impossible, how criminal is such a folly? Cannot you warn him? It would come better from you than from me."

"I will tell him, if you choose, all that I can," replied my father.

She hesitated. "Second thoughts are best," she replied. "Say nothing for the present. I cannot believe your information, and I know Horace better than you do. If it were really so, any actual explanation might only root the evil. If it becomes necessary to speak, I will do it myself. But I must first observe him. Poor Horace! It is absurd. It cannot be. A mere boy!"

She was evidently greatly disturbed by his suggestion. But, without continuing the conversation, rose, and was putting away her work-bag.

"Are you going out?" said my father, who could not tear himself away. "May I accompany you?"

"I think not," she replied. "I am in want of calm and quiet. Your conversation will excite me, and I have need to recover my self-command."

"I promise to touch only on literary subjects. I want your opinion on Scott's poems?"

"If you mean by that, you want to know my opinion of Marmion, I should reply, that immediately after the treat we had this morning, I feel that I admire it too much to criticize. Yet, if you must have a small criticism, I should say, I have no sympathy with the character, or rather sketch of Wilton. Man is, or ought to be, superior to circumstances. Wilton was not a man of the highest kind of courage, or would he not, having sunk out of public sight in the character of knight and noble, have done something better than wander round the world a useless, solitary, morose, despairing palmer? I have no sympathy with that kind of man."

Before the conclusion of their walk, they had made wonderful progress in intimacy. She found it delightful to catch from him the tone of general opinion on literary subjects, and he, unused to intercourse with an appreciative woman, his equal in poetical feeling, though his inferior in cultivation, was fascinated and charmed with her beyond my powers of description.

He quitted her on their return, as they approached Sandrock, for their dinner hour was early, and he had some preparation to make before he joined them.

After she had been into the kitchen, visited the chamber of little Joseph, and tied the bow of her father's best white neck-handkerchief, she proceeded to attend to her own *toilette*. This was always elegant and neat, but generally very brief and inexpensive. On this occasion, however, she was hard to satisfy. Some little adornments which had never seen the light since the disruption of her marriage, were brought out and tried on,

She had hardly put in her last pin, when there was a loud knock at her door, and, opening it, she found Ned and my father standing on the threshold.

"May we come in, sister?" said the former. "Mr. Ord has been admiring the view from my window, and I told him it was a great deal better from yours."

"Come in," she said, recovering from her first surprise, and postponing Ned's lesson in propriety to a more convenient season.

The view my father came to see, he barely looked at. He glanced around him. Nothing could exceed the bare simplicity of the decorations of the chamber. In one of the windows stood a few flowers; above them hung a painted cage, containing a young linnet, the gift of a poor woman. On the mantelpiece were two small vases, filled with graceful flowering grasses; over them hung a slight sketch of a village church and churchyard, shaded by yews. A few—very few—books, devotional, or of Italian or classical poetry, stood on a plain deal shelf over her dressing table.

My father's attention was, however, drawn chiefly to a large blue camlet cloak, evidently "once the property of a gentleman," which, with its brass chain clasp and scarlet woollen lining, lay spread over her sofa bed.

"I hope you admire my sister's counterpane," said Ned, perceiving that it had caught the attention of my father.

He looked into her face and saw her blush, as, turning hastily, she asked him if the portfolio in his hand contained his own poems.

"Nothing, however, could affect me so deeply, as the stanzas you have given me," she added, looking on the ground.

My father seized her hand. "It is the poet's highest triumph," he said, "to awaken such emotions. Might the impression but be lasting, not evanescent, I should indeed have gained from poetry the highest reward she can bestow."

"It is an impression which will last me all my life," she said, in a low voice, as they went down stairs.

The fish was highly approved of. My father found out that Amabel had made the wine sauce, the pickles, and the

pudding. He told some of his best sea stories to Capt. Talbot, who was able to join slightly in the conversation, it being one of his well days. My father was quite surprised by the nautical erudition of Amabel. She even ventured to dispute with him upon the navy list, and set him right on a point of promotion.

After dinner, she went to the piano, by way of sequel to a discussion upon sea songs, and began to sing Tom Bowline and Black-eyed Susan, asking his advice on points of emphasis. My father, who had a good voice, added a second. The music gave the most intense delight to the poor paralytic, who sat by the fire beating time. Annie had gone on some errand, Olivia had retired to her chamber, and Ned was despatched to Dr. Frost's with his Latin grammar. My father and Amabel, left alone, stood by the window, talking low, until the lengthened shadows on the lawn grew dim, and they were startled by the entrance of the girl, with tea and candles. At nine o'clock, a liquor stand was brought in for Captain Talbot, who, before he slept, always took a glass of toddy, like a fine old English officer all of the olden time. Amabel offered to mix one for my father, who could not resist the temptation of a glass of grog from her fair hands.

As soon as he was gone, she hurried up to the sick child's chamber, inwardly reproaching herself, for having that day left him to others' care. My father, meanwhile, was striding briskly homewards, thinking Horace a fool for imagining that a youth of his age could captivate such a woman, but with no trace of the fear he had had the day before, that his young relation would be taken in by the insidious arts of a seductive charmer.

It was very dark, and the road was bad in some places. After several mistakes, he found himself within the garden fence of the Hill Farm, but could not see the path, and fancied he had got into the midst of a flower border. Clods of earth and briars entangled his feet; he tried to kick them away, and as he did so, tripped and fell over a spade.

"Confound the careless rascal who left such things lying in the middle of the foot-path," he exclaimed, to Bevis, as he entered the house, rubbing his shins.

"I suppose it was Horace," said the tutor. "He was out there till the night closed in."

Bevis had that afternoon seen the white rose blooming in a glass in my father's chamber. He had recognised it at once, Horace having made a great fuss over it during the period of its growth, and there was not another like it in that part of the country. In the spirit of ill-natured mischief, he had hastened to tell Horace that the favors of his immaculate lady-love seemed very lightly won, and pretty generally distributed; that she appeared strangely willing to extend the range of her triumphs by purchasing the attentions of a new admirer, at the expense of an old one; that, at present, the absurd enthusiasm of youth blinded his judgment, but that when he grew older

Here Horace interrupted him, exclaiming, that he was not going to stand by and hear a lady such as Amabel, insulted; that nothing could be more mean than to shelter a taunt behind unanswerable arguments of being *olde*. than the other party.

"I know I am young," he cried, "I am willing to acknowledge it. But I also know that grown up man loses the youthful instinct. Learns to argue upon good, but what is good he discerns not. Learns to handle the helm, but breaks the compass to steer by. I would not be you, Mr. Bevis, at your age, for all the gold of Ophir."

So saying, Horace turned with vehement contempt from his unworthy tutor. He found his way down to the river's brink,* and stood upon the bridge over the mill stream. His pride and his strong passions slipped their leash. He lost all self-command. He returned home after nightfall in a state of great bodily and mental suffering. He seized a spade out of

* It has been suggested to me by several friends unaccustomed to the society of the blind, that Horace's activity is rather extraordinary. I beg leave to assure them that I have a very dear friend and cousin, who not only is blind like Horace, but has suffered amputation of one leg. Notwithstanding this double misfortune, he is full of activity and energy, the best farmer in his county, a good correspondent, and a capital horse man. The life of my cousin John, like Horace's example, points one of the morals of my book, and proves that an immortal being has it in his power, *if he will*, to bruise the head of adverse circumstances, which can only bruise his heel if he openly defies them.

the tool-house, and began a sort of indiscriminate devastation in the flower-beds; first digging up the *rose unique*, the pride of his garden.

CHAPTER VI.

Helas ! dans mes longs jours d'alarme
 Que j'ai versé d'amères pleurs !
 Aujourd'hui ces pleurs ont leur charme,
 Je suis heureux de mes douleurs !
 Oui, pour moi quand je vous écoute
 Du ciel s'apaise le courroux ;
 C'est un blasphème que le doute,
 Et je crois au bonheur ;
 Dieu m'a conduit vers vous !

THE next morning every one was late at the Hill Farm; my father slept late, Bevis was late, the servants late, and Horace did not make his appearance at all. He had passed a restless, feverish night, Bevis had been called up to him, and by morning he was seriously indisposed. The day was a wet Sunday, that most wearisome of all days to at least nine tenths of our Christian population. My father went into his cousin's room to see if he could do anything for him, but soon came forth again supposing he was too ill to receive visitors, as Horace, when he entered, turned his face to the wall. This being the case, my father followed the bent of his own inclination, which was to go to church in the hope of meeting Amabel. He took his way past the cottage of the Talbots, and on nearing it, saw Olivia at an open widow with her bonnet on.

"Good morning, Miss Olivia," said my father, entering the gate. "Are any of you going to church this morning?"

"I do not know, Mr. Ord. Has Mr. Bevis gone past?" replied Olivia.

"Horace is ill, and he had to stop at home this morning. No doubt he will regret it, Miss Olivia, when he knows he was expected by you."

Olivia tossed her head.

"You will be late for church, Mr. Ord," said Annie, from her window.

"Are you all at home this morning?" said my father, anxious to find out by an indirect question if Amabel were gone.

"All, except Ned and Amabel. They went at nine o'clock to the Sunday-school."

Having thus ascertained that the pleasure of sheltering Amabel to church under his umbrella was not to be expected, my father lifted his hat, and walked briskly on. He was not so late in getting into church as he had anticipated. The beadle showed him into the Hill Farm pew, and as soon as he had settled himself in his place, he heard a low earnest fervent voice, in the next pew behind him, repeating the responses in the confession. All through the service he listened to Amabel's sweet pleading voice; it awoke in him a hearty desire to pray for her and for himself. He too knelt down, almost beside her, a few frail boards divided them, but their souls together soared above the earth, their hearts together met before their Father's throne. Her earnestness had kindled his. The fervent petitions of that Sunday were the prelude to a deep conviction of the privilege of prayer. He did not see her face. He turned but once to look at her. Her veil was down. Well might she weep, well might she pray; the events of the past week, the new hopes they had awakened, the sins of the past, never to be sufficiently remembered or repented of, each in its turn started her tears. It was one of those moments of self consciousness and of self pity which soften the heart, and make us weep without any very especial or prominent cause.

The church, to them the House of God, the gate of heaven, was perfectly innocent of all Papistical adornments. Of it they might truly say

No sculptured wonders meet the sight,
Nor pictured saints appear,
Nor storied window's gorgeous light,
But God himself is here.

The proportions of the edifice were good, but it had been

subject to a long course of indiscriminating whitewash, which gave to ceiling, walls, and floor, a glaring uniformity, broken only by the black board hung out over the gallery, on which was scored with chalk, the number of the Psalms and Hymns the choir proposed to sing "to the glory of God," and the discomfort of the congregation. From the same gallery, the rising generation had been in the habit of spitting down with tolerable aim, on the grey locks and bald heads of its elders, and the beadle's lithe cane—whack—whack—had in former days resounded there; but the influence of Amabel had, in some degree, restored order and decency among the scholars of the Sunday School.

The discourse delivered by Dr. Frost was as chilling as his name. Had either Theodosius or Amabel listened to it attentively, I am afraid it might have done away with the preceding effect of the service; but, my father, at that time, was not much given to take an interest in any but very eloquent discourses, and Amabel, who had long sat under Dr. Frost's red cushion, had given up attempting to be edified.

My father went out first, hoping to intercept her, but she waited so long in the church to speak to some old women, that he almost began to fear she had escaped, till Ned came out into the church porch, and stood beside him. Shortly afterwards she joined them. As she did so, the first sunbeam of the day fell on her head, and seemed to crown her with a golden glory.

"Where is Horace?" she said. "I do not see him to-day. In general, he is so punctual."

"Horace is ill," replied my father, and proceeded to give her what he knew of the particulars.

He offered her his arm, she took it, and they walked on silently.

At length, he said, "How astonishingly beautiful is our service;—how soothing its influence;—and, though composed of many parts, how perfect as a whole!"

"Indeed, I feel it so," she said. "I know but one omission. There is no prayer for the happy. I felt the want of one this morning. There is abundant provision made for the sad."

‘You wanted a prayer for the happy!’ he said, and stopped.

‘Yes, indeed,’ she said. ‘The tears that I have shed, which I am not ashamed that you should see, were not all grief. There is a new hope brooding in my heart,’ and her voice faltered.

Again they walked on silently. Her thoughts were on the subject of her tears; of happy tears,

Which perfect Joy, perplexed for utterance,
Stole from her sister Sorrow.

Not *perfect joy*, no doubt. But she was like the shipwrecked seaman in an open boat, tossed weary days and dreadful nights upon unvarying waters, who dimly sees ahead at the blue verge of sky and sea, a faint low strip of land. Tears, manfully suppressed during an earnest struggle for his life, start to his eyes. He thanks God and takes courage.

They walked on arm in arm, not wishing to converse; the heart of each was understood by the other, a very different thing, you perceive, from having on matters of fact come to a clear understanding. They entered the premises by the garden. As they climbed up the terraces, she stopped under a warm wall, where grew a sweet-leaved verberna. She paused, broke off the largest sprig, thereby nearly destroying the plant, which she had nursed in her own room during a long winter, and, as she put it into his hand, she bruised one leaf between her fingers.

‘The crushed leaf gives the sweetest fragrance. May I take that as an omen for the future, Mr. Ord?’

He pressed the hand that lay upon his arm, still closer to his heart. He felt as if she had almost given him the right to watch over her, to be concerned in all that affected her.

After a pause, he said, ‘You are wearing yourself out in this place.’

‘At the worst,’ she said, in the sweet words of the Port-royalist, and looked up in his face and smiled, ‘*N’avons nous pas toute l’éternité pour nous reposer?*’

So saying, she took leave of him, and he went on his way

rejoicing. She had smiled into his heart. There was a peculiar fascination in her smile to every one who loved her.

Every leaf in every nook glittered with rain-drops, a summer's sun shone on them, and the dreary rain which had been shed all night, glistened and sparkled in the golden light of mid-day. A fragrance rose from all the moistened earth, the tender wheat was peeping from amongst the clods of the future fields of harvest. The little birds, who had hidden themselves in leafy coverts, while the rain-storm lasted, now blithely hovered upon every branch, or splashed, and bathed, and twittered in the rain pools. Nature, rejoicing in her alchemy, turned all her possessions into profit, and, literally under the influences of the sunlight, even the dust of the earth seemed turned to gold.

As my father walked along, buried in reflections in unison with nature, he heard the patter of feet behind him on the path, and, turning round, beheld Ned Talbot running after him, with a tumbler full of jelly in his hand.

"Where are you going with that, my boy?" said he, good-humoredly.

"I am taking it up to Horace Vane," said Ned. "Sister made some the other day for Joseph, and she thinks it will do Horace good."

"Give it to me then!" said my father, "I shall carry and deliver it quite as safely as you. You can run home to your dinner."

"No, sir; I can't do that," said Master Ned mysteriously, "because you see," here he came near to my father, and began to whisper—"because you see I have a note to deliver from Olivia to Mr. Bevis, and I am to bring back another volume of a book he has got for her."

"Does your sister Amabel know you carry notes between them?" said my father. A delicious thrill went through him, as, for the first time, he spoke her name.

"I don't know quite," said Ned, rather disconcerted. "You see," he added, resuming his confidential whisper, "I think Mr. Bevis and Olivia are going to be married. I wish they would. She would go away then, and we should have another wedding."

"Do you remember that of your sister Amabel?" asked my father.

"Yes; I do just," said Ned.

"What sort of man was her husband?"

"I don't remember him much," said Ned, "but it was all prime. I had a new suit of clothes, and went to church, and ate all the ornaments off the cake, and was dreadfully sick the day after?"

"What became of him?"

"He died," said Ned, repeating an untruth Olivia had one day told him, to get rid of his importunity in asking the same question. "He went to sea, and never came back any more. You must never," he continued, "tell Amabel I told you; for, since she came back to live with us, she can't bear to hear him spoken of, and we have been told never to mention him. You won't tell, will you?"

Horace continued ill, and obstinately refused to let them send to the nearest market town for the medical practitioner. During the early part of the week, daily accounts reached Amabel through the gossips of the village, of the bachelor discomforts of his sick chamber; and at length, her own patient, little Joseph, being once more on his feet, she took courage in the thought of the protection afforded her against Bevis by my father's presence, and one morning walked up to the Hill Farm, with her basket, making her way at once to the blind boy's chamber. He was lying, at that moment, in a most uneasy slumber. His arms were tossed above his head, his thick hair was tangled, and his bed-clothes in the most uncomfortable disorder; two or three pillows, which, in the restless agitation of the night, he had flung away, lay on the floor; with one of them he had knocked down a small table. She cleared a chair, put down on it her bonnet, shawl, and basket, and then, with her light step and fairy touch, proceeded to restore an appearance of order and of comfort to the chamber. In her hands, creaking doors would never creak, and glasses never rattle.

The room was set to rights, the beef tea she had brought was simmering upon the hearth, and she herself, calm, still, and

gentle, when Horace woke, was sitting by his side. He recognised her presence even before she laid her cool, soft hand on his, and as he felt the touch, he made an uneasy movement.

"Dear Horace," she said, "you do not know how much more comfortable I have made your room. Now, let me smoothe this rugged mane, and re-arrange these troubled pillows."

"What does it signify?" he said, in an impatient tone. "What use am I on earth? A blight—a good-for-nothing burden."

"Why, Horace, how unlike you!" said Amabel in surprise, for she had come up there to minister to the body, and was not prepared to find the mind diseased. "Dear Horace, you shall not call your misfortune by hard names. You are ungrateful to that God who has given you large opportunities of usefulness. Oh! Horace, words can never tell how, when trials were multiplied, and I must have fainted without help, your silent sympathy has strengthened and refreshed me!"

"Say that again—say that again," cried Horace. "Say I am something yet to you."

"Much—much indeed, dear Horace, your love is more to me than words can tell; and my confidence in your affection has sustained my courage when without you Oh! Horace, I do not love to think of times like those," she said, and stopped; then murmured to herself those words of the Ancient Mariner—

My soul hath been
Alone on a wide, wide sea,
So lonely 'twas, that God Himself
Scarce seemed there to be.

"Mrs. Leonard," cried Horace, after a moment's pause, "will you answer me one question?"

"Certainly, Horace, should it be a question I *can* answer."

"Have you known Theodosius Ord before——, or has he sup? Did you ever see him before?" he cried.

Amabel hesitated a moment, and then—"You have asked a hard thing," she replied. "To explain to you the relations that subsist between Mr. Ord and myself, would lead me to speak of

things which, in honor and duty, I am bound not to mention. Not secrets only of my own, for I would be willing to lay before you the story of my life with all its faults, its errors, and shortcomings. I *have* seen Theodosius Ord before. Will that brief answer satisfy you?"

"Oh! did you—answer me this one more question," said Horace, seizing her hand, "did you," and he started up in bed, and his face flushed, and he turned on her his eyes, those eyes that could not see, "did you give *him* my rose, my poor little *rose unique* which I gave you? Did you give it him as a love-token—to be valued for your sake? Had it no sort of value because *I* raised it for you?"

"Horace," she said gravely, "listen to me. You know not what you say. No man ought to presume to talk to me of love tokens. I would not, for a forest of magnolias, have given any one your rose. I never gave it to Mr. Ord. I never knew, till now, it had been in his possession. I wore it home from Dr. Frost's, and thought it safe, but missed it when I was undressing. Are you sure you are not mistaken?"

"Yes, indeed," said Horace, "Bevis saw it in his room, and I went in and found it there. Nothing but the fear that you would be displeased, prevented my tearing it in my jealous fury. Will you forgive me? I was very unjust and very wrong."

She looked very sad and very grave for a few moments.

"Lie down, dear Horace," she said. "Lie down and hear me. I believe your love for me to be so pure, and real, and strong, that you will believe and trust me, though I speak in riddles. Oh! Horace, for that love's sake, if you knew how sad my life has been, you would be glad to know that I walk in the brightness of a new hope since your cousin has been with you. If that hope is not deceived, before very long, dear Horace, I trust to tell you all. Theodosius has come here, ostensibly to pay you a visit, but in reality, because I live here. I knew it from the time of his arrival. And, know, dear Horace, once for all, and once for ever, that between us there is no question of affection. It would be *criminal* for Theodosius Ord, or any other man who knew my history, to ask of me what is commonly called love; and vain—*utterly vain*, for

any one whatever, to hope to inspire me with such a feeling. Horace, is my joy to be dimmed because you will not share it? When happiness and honor, love, station, and a name are all restored to me, is my satisfaction to be dashed with bitterness, because Horace Vane, whose sympathy was so dear to me in my days of grief, refuses to be glad that I am happy?"

He started up, and seizing both her hands, pressed them together between his own. "Hear me swear," he said, "that your happiness is dearer to my heart a hundred thousand fold than my own. That I *will* and *do* rejoice in anything that makes you happy. No tears of mine shall fall upon your path. If it can please you, when you are happy, I will be so too."

"May God bless you and keep you. The Lord make His face to shine upon you, and be merciful unto you," she said, consecrating, as it were, his vow by her most solemn blessing, and, stooping over him, she pressed a cool, calm, elder sister kiss upon the eyelids of his sightless eyes and on his burning forehead.

After a quiet pause, she rose, proceeded to toast crisp, and to prepare a slice of bread, after which she poured the beef tea she had been cooking, into a cup, and bringing it to his bed-side, invited him to dine. He tried to rally, poor fellow, and take an interest in all she did. She put the cup and spoon into his hand, and made him feel the thin crisp bars of toast.

"How nice it all is when you make it," he said. "Mrs. Cæsar brings me great greasy basins of coarse broth, holding a quart."

"If you behave well," said Amabel, trying to smile and to speak gaily, though there was a little quiver in her voice, "I am coming up to make it for you every day."

She kept her word. The sort of slow fever under which Horace was suffering, was not to be shaken off at once, though he grew better day by day. Every morning my father walked to Saudrock, for the pleasure of escorting her. Often he came into Horace's room, while she was there, and heard her read, or read to them, while she worked; for Horace, anxious to show her he could conquer his own passion, had become very cordial to his cousin. Sometimes they talked, more often they read. "The Rejected Addresses," was, to my father's great disgust,

one of their favorite volumes. "Amabel had always, as he called it, "a perverse *penchant* for parody." She hailed Bon Gaultier's abilities years ago, before they were generally acknowledged; and gave a binding to that number of Tait's Magazine which contained his review of the *Topaz*.

The days of Horace's convalescence were thus upon the whole, "merry and joyful." The poor fellow struggled to be gay, and succeeded at last, without a painfully visible expenditure of effort. The natural gaiety of Amabel broke forth, as it had never done since the days of her girlhood. She laughed, and quoted fragments of gay verse, and sang snatches of sea song up stairs, down stairs, and in poor Horace's chamber. Her step was buoyant, and her smile was gay; there was almost an air of triumph in the way in which sometimes, when alone and very elate, she tossed her head and carried herself. On the gloomy background of her past life, glittered and sparkled the trifling pleasures of the present. She seemed to say with Browning's charming Duchess, when contemplating the trials and distresses so ill suited to her nature—

It was all a jest against God; who meant
That I should be ever, as I am, content
And glad in His sight. Therefore glad will I be.

And my father, who had first loved her in her sadder moods, became bewitched with her in those of gladness. He became domesticated at her cottage. He would have been there all day long, had he not considered himself bound to devote some of his time to Horace. He knew all her ways and all her haunts. He could lie in wait for her at all hours, and when he intruded, she was never displeased. He began to frame plans for their future. He was made wretched one day, because having bitterly complained to her in a fit of disgust, of the slowness of his promotion, and having told her that he thought of not applying any more for employment, and of never aspiring to anything beyond his lieutenant's commission, she answered him that any man was wrong to give up his profession; that if he quitted the navy, he would be cutting off from his future all the past of his life, that naval men always grumbled at the ser-

vice, and Nelson himself was once on the verge of an open rupture with the Admiralty. "If she wants me to go to sea," said he, "she cannot love me." But, soon he forgot this discouragement, and was eagerly endeavoring to find out even her most trivial tastes. He began to think that a retired country life, enlivened by farm work and literary labor, would be all he wanted to construct a Paradise, an Eve being already provided for his Eden. He had a barely sufficient funded competency left him by his parents, and it was curious to see how eagerly he began to make acquaintance with the farmers, and to inquire the price of land, and the capabilities of houses, and how earnestly he consulted her upon these subjects, and how her lightest opinion swayed him.

While he indulged these dreams of cottage love, and planted pleasant fancies in his paradise, Amabel was not without her visions. Her thoughts turned often to her old home, the cottage within the park bounds of the Cedars, planning alterations in its flower beds, and improvements in its house-keeping, the transplantation of her new ideas, and her dwarf roses for the embellishment of that home in which she had had little interest when she possessed it.

CHAPTER VII.

Two ears and but a single tongue
By nature's laws to man belong;
The lesson she would teach is clear—
Repeat but half of what you hear.

FRASER'S MAGAZINE.

My father's intimacy with Amabel was now so well established, that, in the course of one of their confidential conversations, he informed her of the notes carried by Ned Talbot between Bevis and Olivia.

A few days later, whilst looking with interest, in the dusk of the evening, at a fine growth of turnips, in a field near the entrance of the village, he was accosted in a truculent way by

Bevis, who, in an extremely excited and offensive manner, broke in upon his meditation.

"I understand, Mr. Ord," said he, "you have been troubling yourself very unnecessarily with my concerns; that you have taken upon you to make representations, concerning my intercourse with Miss Olivia, to her family; and I must say I consider it an officious interference, sir."

"Upon my word, Mr. Bevis," replied my father, who, being an officer, restrained his temper, when, if a civilian, he might possibly have knocked the fellow down, "this is not language to be held to me. I am not conscious that I have interfered unwarrantably in any affair that affects you."

"You did *not* mention, I presume, to that sister of her's, that choice morsels of correspondence have occasionally passed between us."

"I certainly may have mentioned," my father replied, "that I found Ned Talbot carrying notes one morning. I knew Mrs. Leonard was anxious on the subject, and—"

"And I must say," interrupted Bevis, "that for *her* to be playing the guardian of vestal virtue, and casting stones at her sister on the ground of impropriety, is one of the richest jokes I ever heard of."

"It is quite time to stop these insinuations. I should like to know, sir, what you mean?" indignantly exclaimed my father.

"It is nearly as good," continued Bevis, eluding his question—"it is nearly as good as *your* setting up to lecture *me* upon this subject. I must say the cool *self-possession* of you both is quite remarkable! My intentions respecting Miss Olivia are strictly honorable, whatever yours may be respecting the other *lady*."

My father burst forth, "I will trouble you, to remember, in my presence, that the lady whom you dare to sneer at, I hope to make my wife! For any further remarks made in your present style, you will have to be answerable to me, sir."

Bevis stopped short. "Why, Theodosius Ord," said he, "shake hands. I beg your pardon. I did not mean to offend you. But . . . you are joking! . . . You

don't mean to say . . . !” And Bevis finished off each uncompleted sentence with a short contemptuous laugh.

“I should like to know upon what grounds you have been pleased to base such vile insinuations?” cried my father. “I can hardly suppose that any *gentleman* would dare to wound a defenceless widow thus, without fancying at least he had some slight grounds”

“‘If imputation and strong circumstances—
Which lead directly to the door of truth—
Will give you satisfaction, you may have it,’”

interrupted Bevis.

“You may well quote Iago. I believe you are playing the very part. But you will find me no Othello, sir.”

“Listen then, Ord. It is not easy to make you hear reason, you are so excitable on this subject. I have known all along there was a screw loose in her history. I have seen her wince and blush, and evade questions, from the time she first arrived in this place. All about her was not open and above board, as all that concerns female honor should be. And you may lay it down as a general rule—a rule without exception in English society—that the woman or man, close-mouthed about the antecedents of their lives, well know that there is something which will not bear to be looked at too keenly.”

“These are mere general assertions, Mr. Bevis,” said my father.

“I am coming to particulars. Of course I can give you little positive information on my own personal knowledge. But I can tell you the impression made on my mind by conversation with Olivia. The little fool is tolerably discreet, too, upon this point, and this alone; but to-day, when she heard that you and Mrs. Leonard had been interfering with her conduct, her temper got the better of her, and she vowed to me that of all the impertinent things she ever heard, was her setting up to read lectures on propriety—that if I only knew all she knew. . . . And she stopped, and I could not get a word more out of her.”

“Mere malice of Olivia’s,” my father cried.

“Oh! if you are going to reject all testimony as malicious, it

is no use talking. *You* may persist in considering her a saint, but you cannot prevent other people from remembering that the character of a female saint has always been supposed to combine a good deal of the 'fair penitent.' Did you ever," he continued, seeing my father was turning away, "did you ever hear her talk of the village of S——, a place of some celebrity, about a dozen or fifteen miles from here? I suspect you never heard her mention it. A short time after she came here, a travelling pedlar told the people at the ale-house, that he knew her well, and knew more than she would like him to tell us of her story. He said he had seen her—it must be now two years ago—at S——, living in strict retirement, secluded from her relations and former friends, and without any male protector; that she had an infant born there, which soon died, and she left the place almost immediately after, with a good-looking man, in a post-chaise. There, now, is a series of facts, which I suspect, in all the intimacy of your late intercourse, you never heard alluded to by her."

My father could not say that she had ever made the least mention of any such passages in her history. He feebly tried, at first, to prove that the pedlar must have been mistaken; but Bevis was positive on the question of identity.

"I know I have made you angry with me, Ord, but it is for your true good," said he. "You are a man entirely above caring for the opinion of the world, but still I do not fancy you would like to have the character of Mrs. O—— mixed up with the beer swilled in a hedge ale-house."

So saying, Mr. Bevis turned away, muttering—"Lift not up your horn on high, look not with a stiff neck." I could preach a profitable sermon upon that text to certain people."

As to my father, if he had a fault, it was, as I have said already, an extreme sensitiveness to public opinion, as Bevis knew when he flattered him on the possession of a quality in which he was quite aware of his deficiency. The fault must have been inherited, I think, for he shared it in common with his cousin, Capt. Warner, only the latter was more easily swayed by his feelings than my father, having a habit of taking the bearings of things in relation to himself, his views upon

most subjects being strictly personal. Of course, my father was a man superior to the vulgar influence of *Vanity Fair* on points of conscience; the public opinion that had such power over him, was the opinion of the two or three immediately around him. The opinion of the world does not usually break upon a man at once, but approaches him in the narrowing circles of acquaintance, friendship, connexion, and intimacy. He had a candid way of judging things, and could always see a certain amount of reason in either side of any question set before him.

The representations of Bevis had exceedingly disturbed him, He turned, as that gentleman quitted him, and walked slowly back in the direction of the cottage. Bevis had given him an altered view of life, and showed him all the glory of his hopes with a shadow upon them. As he repassed the turnip fields at which he had been gazing, he felt the change that had passed over him. He had no longer any interest in the rotation of their crops, in their price, or their production.

He walked back pretty rapidly to the cottage, and entered the premises by the garden. As he crossed the strip of lawn, and passed by the open window of the sitting-room, he heard voices. Olivia was using the very words which Bevis had attributed to her. "I think," she said, in an excited voice, "that for *you*—for you to throw a stone at me on the ground of impropriety, is the most audacious piece of impudence I ever heard of!"

At that moment both the sisters caught sight of Theodosius, and Olivia becoming suddenly silent, flung out of the room, violently slamming the door. My father, on coming into the room, found Amabel standing by the table very still and very pale, looking worn out and suffering.

"I am very—that is, very glad—I am very glad to—"

The effort she had been making, during the discussion with Olivia, to retain the mastery of her feelings and of her indignation, had been too much for her. She had retained her calmness till the interview was over; now she faltered, and sank down in the nearest chair. My father, alarmed by her paleness, was about to ring the bell, but she retained presence of mind enough to prevent his doing so, and pointed to a

lavender-water bottle on the table. He brought it to her, and as she poured its contents on her handkerchief, and bathed her brow, he stood and looked at her. Her paleness, her air of suffering, her womanly dependence, all appealed to his manliness for protection. Was he, in whom she had placed trust, who had had such opportunities of knowing her, to abandon her lightly to the evil tongues of others?

He had come, hoping to ask her some questions, but was this a time to do so? And yet the words he had just heard from the lips of Olivia—words which apparently she had not reproved, had sent an arrow to his heart, and he could not bear to leave her without quieting, in some degree, his doubts and fears.

At last he said, when she seemed to be revived, “Do you know how far it is to S——?”

“Fifteen miles of bad road. Do you think of going there?” she replied.

“I thought of going to-morrow on horseback,” he continued, not boldly, however, for he was not accustomed to approach a subject indirectly. “It is a region that has gained a name in print, and it seems a pity to go out of the neighbourhood without seeing it.”

“Are you going to leave us?” she said. She was wiping lavender-water stains from her dress, and he did not see her face. He did not answer her question, but said, “Were you ever there?”

“Oh! yes,” she said, “I know it well. The first sad months after—of my widowed life were passed at S——. There my child died.”

“You have never spoken to me of your child.”

“The wound is too fresh,” she replied. “I should upset myself at once, and you see how much I require self-command. If you go to S——,” she continued after a pause, “let me give you a letter of introduction to the Vicar; I may almost call him my earliest true friend.”

So saying she rose. “I am greatly obliged to you,” he said, seizing her hand, and shaking it with fervor. “How white you look!” continued he, looking tenderly on her pale face,

till a faint blush stole over it. "Had you not better go and lie down?"

"It is pleasant to be cared for," she said. "But Mr. Ord—," her eye caught a shadow flitting furtively across the grass, and she put her hand to her side as if to check a sudden spasm. "It is as I suspected. There goes Olivia. I am not at all equal to my duty towards my sister. Mr. Ord, as you go home, will you observe if she meets Bevis, and, if you can, break up their interview?"

"I hardly like to play the spy," said he.

She looked up quickly. "Perhaps not," she answered with a smile; "but no one can so graciously fulfil a graceless duty as you."

"I do not think you need be in any fear of Bevis. I met him half an hour ago on his way homeward."

"I am glad of it," she replied. "Responsibility without power is a great trial. Call here to-morrow on your way to S——. I will have the letter ready for you."

In obedience to this direction he presented himself the next morning before the gate of the cottage, mounted on a shaggy, tawny pony, born and bred, in the neighboring forest, in the midst of a drove of its own kind.

The fellow who owned and had brought him up from the village, had been over once or twice to S——, and gave my father some directions for his journey. He was to cross the Holt Forest, skirt the land inclosed for the Ranger's House (he would know it by the unusual magnitude of the oaks upon the lawn), then to bear to the left for several miles, choosing his way among the cart tracks, and at a certain point he would meet with a deep ditch and a gap in a hedge, through which he would have to scramble, and was to be careful the pony did not kick him off. He always kicked at such places—"kicked like the very devil." On the other side of the gap he would find himself in a rough lane. If he followed it a mile or two he would fall in with a house, and might then ask his way.

Amabel came out to him with her letter. "Here it is," she said. "The Vicar is the only person in this part of the world

who really knows my history. I felt myself at liberty to reveal to him much that I have conscientiously concealed from every other person."

"And from me?" said my father. "May I never claim the privilege of a friend, and have you talk to me of yourself and of your sorrows?"

"The time may come," she answered gravely.

"Let it come now!" he cried.

"Not yet. There are things I may only speak of to the man of God I have chosen for my spiritual adviser, and . . . my husband."

Strange courtship! And yet my father rode away displeased with her last words. It seemed to him she was leading him on too fast, that she was making a little too sure that he proposed to be her husband. I do not say that he *thought* this, but he *felt* it. Pleasant thoughts did not come easily to him that morning. We have all had experience of such days. When children in the nursery, we knew what it was "to get out of bed the wrong side," or to be attended by "the black dog;" and, in Mahomedan history, it is told of Numan bin el Manzer, an Arab prince of some celebrity, that to two days of the week he had given names: one he called Naâm, the day of good fortune; the other Bös, or the day of evil. All petitioners who came to him on Naâm he dismissed with bounty; as for all who came during that he called Bös, he rolled their heads in the dust of the earth with the decree of execution.

It was so with my father. All the pleasant fancies that presented themselves upon this evil day "rolled in the dust of execution."

That part of the forest through which he had to pass was a mere dreary barren waste, destitute of trees. Here and there some scathed and giant oak, inclosed and spared when all its fellows sank under the stroke of the woodman, lifted its bare and leafless arms to heaven, a sort of witness for nature against the destructive propensities of man.

The ground over which his pony trod was full of sand holes. It had none of the beauty of the purple moorland; it had not even the green, short, smooth turf of the wild commons of

Norfolk, on which flocks of geese pick up a living. All was a uniform and dingy green; and my father, sailor though he was, and fond of reckless riding, could not push his pony fast through this uninteresting district, for fear of his setting his feet into deep holes.

My good papa was glad enough to find himself at the gap in the hedge he had been warned of, and settling himself more firmly on his beast, he attempted to push him through. The vicious little brute laid his ears close to his head, and sent his heels high into the air, but my father stuck tight to him, holding on by the mane as well as by his knees, and was rather proud of getting safely through into a lane so astonishingly rugged that it seemed, as I have before described it, more like the rough bed of a watercourse than like a road. It also proved, by reason of a late rain, extremely slippery, the pony stumbling and sliding at every step over large blocks of wet stone. It was long past noon when my father arrived within sight of the village. There nothing had been altered since Amabel left it, two years before, with her lawyer, Mr. Trevor. Outward and visible changes in the street had been sparingly made during the past half century. The yews had looked no younger fifty years before; the church then lay as closely shrined in ivy; a few of the stone cottages of the peasantry had indeed renewed their thatch, but on the roofs of many grew the same gay wall-flowers and fat leeks which had been planted by the fathers of the present generation.

My father had no difficulty in recognising the parsonage; and having dismounted at the Royal Stag, leaving his jaded pony in the hands of the ostler of that place of entertainment, he walked across the green to the gate of the Vicar. A tax-cart was standing before it, the horse held by a smart boy about ten years old; who, in reply to the stranger's inquiry, informed him that the Vicar had just been sent for to the utmost boundary of his parish, to fulfil the double duty of pastor and of magistrate.

"Nevertheless," said Theodosius, "take this letter in to him, my boy; I will hold the horse while you go."

After a few moments the Vicar came out of the house with the note still in his hand.

"How is the lady, sir? She speaks of you as one of her true friends."

"And no less so, sir, of you. How long have you been acquainted with her?" said my father.

"I received her when she came friendless and alone into this part of the country," said the Vicar, referring, as he spoke, to the letter in his hand. It said, "The gentleman I introduce to you is the cousin and most intimate friend of my husband. He has come here to examine into the tenor of my life since its catastrophe, and to effect our reconciliation. Need I, my dear friend, tell you how hope and happiness now seem to smile upon me? He has, however, never alluded in *express terms* to the *circumstances* of the past. I presume he has been made acquainted with the narrative I wrote to my husband while my sweet baby was still living, and therefore I had rather not speak to him myself of *past events*, nor do I wish you to allude to them further than he may lead you. I imagine the purpose of both is, not to inquire into the truth of my letter (at least such inquiries are not to be made *here*); but they wish to ascertain how I have spent my life since the terrible separation; whether I am more worthy of trust; whether, to use your own quotation, 'the present day has been the better for yesterday's error.' Say what you can for me, dear friend, with a due regard to truth, and believe that your counsels and your kindness never can be forgotten by one who is equally bound to you by ties of deep respect and true regard."

"She tells me, sir," said the Vicar, "that you would like to satisfy some doubts by making inquiries. I shall be glad to answer any questions you may ask; but I am not quite sure from what she says how far she would wish me to volunteer my information."

"I do not mean, of course," said my father, "to ask you to betray anything that Mrs. Leonard would rather conceal."

"You will learn the circumstances of her history, best, I think, from her own lips, or her own pen; but I fancy she wishes me to bear testimony that, after an intimate acquaintance with her for many months, during which she opened her heart to me as

her friend and pastor, no doubt remains upon my mind that she is not only pure in fact but pure in heart."

"That is, an honorable man need not fear I feel ashamed, sir, knowing her as I have done, to ask this question, to take her as his wife, and to be proud of her?"

"Indeed, sir, had I known her husband, I should have said to him long ago, 'fear not to take unto thee thy wife,'" replied the Vicar.

"What became of him?" exclaimed my father.

"Indeed, sir, I don't know," said the Vicar in surprise.

"He must have been cruelly violent and unjust to her," said my father.

"There were false friends and many circumstances that may well have deceived him," said the Vicar. "There is plenty of heathenism in our modern code of honor. Our pattern man is modelled, not after Christ, but after Achilles! Sometimes prompt anger and injustice seem to him almost a duty. I am not, however, going to acquit her husband. I think that, having married one so young and inexperienced, and having bound himself to love, cherish, and protect her, he should have borne with her. Instead of which, having planted her as it were into the place provided for his wife, he had not patience to wait till she had adapted herself to the climate and the soil."

"I have heard a clever friend say that the world is made up of round holes and square holes, and round people get into the square, and square people into the round," replied my father.

"That is particularly the case at the commencement of married life," returned the Vicar, "and woman's pliability enables her, if at first a little humored, soon to adapt herself to her hole and its proportions. However, she was more to blame than he, and for this reason. From what I understand of him, I think he was a man who, with native kindliness of heart and generosity of feeling, had little power of discriminating character. Indeed I suspect he would have learned to appreciate his wife more through the warmth of his heart than the clearness of his understanding. She, on the contrary, should have taken the initiative. She was quite capable of appreciating his character, of adapting herself to his tastes, and of winning his respect and

admiration. But, sir," he continued, being, as we know, a little long-winded, "I am sorry that indispensable business calls me away, and that my wife is passing a few weeks at the seaside. I shall be home probably this evening, and if you will do me the favor to pass the night, I have a few bottles of old Sherry, over which I will discuss this matter more at length with you."

"One question more," said my father, as the Vicar was getting into his cart and gathering up his reins; "one question more. Why did she come down here for her confinement, away from all her friends and her connexions?"

"So ho! so ho!" cried the Vicar to his horse. "That is easily explained, sir. She was recommended here by the Drydens, old people of her village, who came from this part of the country."

Here, the Vicar's horse, tired of waiting, tossed his head and started from the door.

My father, having partaken of a woolly mutton chop and a bottle of bitter port wine at the Royal Stag, wandered into the church-yard, and stood by the grave of little Leonard, underneath the yews.

The sun was sinking towards the west, yet it was not going down upon the day's ill-feelings. A few hours' absence had made her dearer to him than ever. He gazed into the western sky, and built up airy castles. "I can be her all on earth!" he cried. "What man would not desire to be all things to the wife he loves?"

A yearning to tell her so took possession of him; a desire to see her before night-fall; a longing to acquire, as soon as possible, the right to shelter and protect her.

"Why should I wait?" he cried. "Do I not now know all I came to know? Why should I stay for that good man's return? To-morrow, to-morrow she is mine! When I clasp her to the shelter of my breast will she not whisper all the circumstances of her history?"

So thinking, my father took leave of the churchyard and remounted his pony. All sorts of pleasant meditations came with the deepening twilight. His fancy took its own way, so

did his quadruped. Suddenly he found himself on his back on the other side of the gap, while the pony, kicking, as his owner had said, like the "very devil," was galloping with streaming rein towards home.

Amabel was sitting with Horace by the river's side. The poor fellow had enjoyed that day. He had spent it with her, taking pleasure as the blind do, in showing skill in various little household avocations. Captain Talbot was asleep in the twilight. They had talked of gaieties and gravities; now Horace was showing her some sleight-of-hand. Bevis had gone over to the market town that afternoon. She was relieved from her anxiety, and her heart was very happy.

"Hark!" said Horace, "here comes Ord, at the true sailor's pace!"

Suddenly the pony stopped, tossed his vicious-looking head at them over the hedge, and then resumed his gallop to the village.

Amabel screamed at the sight of the empty saddle. "Oh, Horace!" she cried, "we must get help. Oh, Horace, how dreadful!"

In moments of emergency the true relation of the sexes adjusts itself instinctively. What woman, in sudden mutual grief, does not, by impulse, become a comforter, and in moments of alarm as naturally look at once to the nearest person of the other sex to shelter and protect her? Perhaps at no moment of poor Horace's life was he more proud than when she thus involuntarily acknowledged the claims of his manhood; when she clung to him and shuddered, and he felt, though blind, he was protecting her.

After a few moments her presence of mind returned. Horace thought that they had better go at once to the Hill Farm, and thence despatch help, as the pony would give the alarm in the village. They got together two or three stout men, and sent them off upon the road. Amabel returned meanwhile to the cottage, while Horace remained at the farm, whence he engaged to send her word whatever happened.

Late in the evening—past ten o'clock—my father rang at the

cottage door. Amabel, with a candle in her hand, flew down to open it.

"I am come to report myself," said he; "to-night I feel a little jarred—to-morrow I shall be as 'right as a trivet.'"

"I shall not ask you to come in," she said, after a few words about his fall had passed. "It is too late."

"No; but dear Amabel," he cried, seizing her hand, "to-morrow will you not give me a quiet hour? I have so much I want to say to you. Meantime I have brought you something that you may value; a violet from"

"From the grave of my child. Do you know," she added, "that of late—since we have met—I have indulged again in day dreams. Sometimes I see myself once more the happy wife; sometimes sweet baby faces, with fair curls, seem clustering round my knee.

I seek to take a lily hand
And kiss a rosy chin.

And in the midst of such thoughts came, as I lay awake last night, a vision of the morning of the Resurrection. I imagined myself lying in the grave, with monument and name, and round me slept my family of children. I had a mother's heart for all; yet, as the great trumpet sounded, and we rose, I clasped my pale lost darling to my breast, strained in my arms, and nestling in my bosom."

CHAPTER VIII.

Inseeing sympathy is hers, which chasteneth
No less than loveth, scorning to be bound
With fear of blame; but which ever hasteneth
To pour the balm of kind words in the wound—
If they be wounds which such sweet teaching makes—
Giving itself a pang for others' sakes.

Irene J. R. LOWELL.

"HORACE," said my father, bending over his blind cousin; "I have something I want to say to her. I wish you would leave us a little while alone."

It was the following afternoon; she was sitting again with Horace on the rustic bench by the side of the little river. Horace had been persuading her to put her hands on his, and try if she could draw them back more quickly than he could grasp them. He was very expert at this amusement: she was caught again and again. Horace was delighted at his triumph; and their mutual laughter rang over the water.

When his cousin came up to him, laid his hand upon his arm, and whispered his request, the smile faded from his face. But, getting up, he said at once, "Good bye, Mrs. Leonard, I believe I must go. Do not come with me," continued he, finding she had risen to assist him. "No—no," he whispered, when they were a little withdrawn from Theodosius, "stay with him. He has something to say to you. May you be happy—very happy. My warmest wishes go with you."

"Give me a prayer," dear Horace," she said, trembling, "one little prayer may turn a vague good wish into a blessing."

"Do you think so?" said he. "'*Prier, c'est dire que l'on aime.*' For one prayer that I offer for myself, my heart says two for you."

So saying, Horace turned away; she watched him anxiously till he reached the upper terrace of the garden, then stooped and gathered thoughtfully a few flowers. My father, when she raised her head, was at her side. He drew her arm through his, and led her back to the seat beside the water.

I cannot tell how a man feels when he is about to make an offer, but I know how a woman feels when she thinks she is going to receive one. There is hardly in her life a more uncomfortable moment. She is too nervous to talk calmly upon common things. She fears, by some rash word or look, to precipitate the event and compromise her modesty. She tries to veil her heart, to maintain a calm reserve. In a few moments she may concede to him the right, the holy right, to look into her heart—

Ce cœur dont rien ne reste,
L'amour oté.

But now—for just this little while—he must not even guess at what she hides from him. She is like little children on the eve

of a surprise, when, though their mother well knows what is coming, she lets them climb upon her lap and cover up her eyes with eager fingers.

The holier a woman's heart, the greater her reserve in such an hour. The deeper her own feelings, the less is her power over those of her lover.

I have known men who mistook the self-consciousness and timidity of such moments for indifference. I have known women, like unskilful chess-players, succeed in reducing the other party to extremity, without the power of completing the game by a check-mate.

Though Amabel was not expecting an offer of marriage, her feelings were very much the same as those I have adverted to. She feared to urge on what he had to say, even by her silence. She anxiously searched for any observation possible to make, so trivial that it might not even *appear* designed to prompt him.

At that moment they heard the voice of little Joe calling her.

"Don't go to that child. Give me time to speak," cried my father. "I cannot bear the claims that are made upon you by these people. I cannot bear to see you from morning till night the slave of their caprices."

"And I answer," replied Amabel, "that you always err in your judgment upon such points. The person who is prone to fancy he could do God better service in a higher grade, is not yet equal to the station that he occupies. The glory of a woman, '*c'est moins encore qu'elle suffit au travail de chaque jour, que le travail de chaque jour lui suffit.*'"

"Your teachings," exclaimed my father, "unlike the teachings of anybody else, are drawn from your experience. You know already what my heart is longing to express. You know I have never yet seen, or hope to see your equal. You won my heart from the moment I first talked with you. Amabel! I dare not say you are in my eyes less a woman than an angel. It is your womanliness that charms me——."

"Mr. Ord!" she cried, "you know best your own meaning. Is this language to be addressed to *me* by *you*?"

"It is the language of a lover to the object of his devotion," he exclaimed.

She sprang up suddenly. The flowers that she held fell at her feet.

"Do not finish that sentence," she cried. "I will endeavor to forget it was ever begun."

She had thrown herself again upon the bench, her face was hidden, but her whole frame shook with her weeping.

"Alas! beloved, you must indeed have fallen upon evil men and evil times. We are not all like Bevis," said my father. "It had not occurred to me to preface my confession by the declaration that my love for you was not an insult. I beseech you give me a husband's right to protect and make you happy; and make the little I possess better and dearer than other men's great wealth, because shared with you. Let me in turn participate in your secrets and your sorrows."

"Say that again—say that again!" she cried. "Let me be sure I heard aright! Strike the death-blow of my hopes firmly—repeatedly. Make sure that not one lives. Let me be certain there is no mistake this time."

"Dearest! I woo you with all respect and all devotion. These tears, beloved, are the last that those dear eyes shall shed."

And stooping down he kissed her drapery and her unresisting hand. He was eager to give her some token of a sympathy for which he found no words.

Suddenly she became aware of his caresses. She started up, drew her hand brusquely from his lips, and by an involuntary impulse brushed the back of it against her dress, as if to wipe from it his kisses.

"Mr. Ord," said she, "no more of this. A frightful mistake has been encouraged. Your disappointment can be nothing to my suffering. You must strangle all your brood of pleasant fancies almost at their birth, but mine were full grown hopes; and such die hard. Reproach me as you will—you cannot blame me as I blame myself."

She paused a moment, as it seemed, to gather strength, and hid her face; she was probably in prayer.

"Hear me, Mr. Ord," she exclaimed, laying her hand upon his arm with the dignity of command. "Hear me, and look into my eyes. Be sure you feel that I say the truth, although I speak in riddles. I cannot explain this mystery. I thought you knew —. No matter now, blame me for all—. No! do not blame me, I cannot endure blame from you. The present must bear the misunderstandings of the past, but let there be no mistake between us on the subject of the future. We must never meet again, unless—. Oh! but that cannot be!" she cried, with a fresh burst of grief. "We must never meet again. I conjure you to leave Sandrock for your own sake and for mine. There is no hope. No suit man ever made to woman, has suffered a rejection more hopeless—more complete than yours to me."

"But, Mrs. Leonard, how is this?" exclaimed my father. "Surely you encouraged me to hope."

"I know I did—I know I did, but it was all a mistake, a fatal, terrible mistake. Believe me, Mr. Ord—or if you will not believe me on my word, hear me swear solemnly, that I never *once thought* of you in the light of a lover. I believed you my best earthly friend. I thought you knew—."

"Tell ~~me~~ but this," my father cried, "has any other man a prior claim to your regard?"

"Yes, sir," she cried, with a slightly impatient proud movement of her head. "Yes, sir,—*my husband*."

"And is his memory my only rival? A man who could be violent, unjust. Ah! Amabel, in time—."

"Violent!—unjust!" she cried, and her eyes lighted.

"The Vicar told me so—or rather," said my father, struck by her air of indignation, "the words themselves may have been mine. The Vicar gave me the impression."

"If he was ever *unjust*," she said, "it was because he pronounced judgment upon insufficient premises. If he was *violent*, it was because he was concerned, as every man should be, for the maintenance of his honor! Your own lips have acquitted him," she continued, remembering the words she had heard between Theodosius Ord himself, and the second of Col. Guiscard, in the gallery of Foxley. "I mean, you would

acquit him—— I mean ——. No,” said she, calming herself, “I cannot explain all. The secret I have kept so far shall not leak out in hints. Only, I repeat, do not deceive yourself. Do not imagine you have won a tenderness that, under other circumstances, might have ripened into love. I do not wish to leave you the smallest ground of hope. Such hopes as you have formed are an insult to me.”

“I must understand you better,” said my father. “It cannot be possible I have been misinformed by your own family, that you are not a widow, but a wife—your husband cannot be living?”

“Yes!” she exclaimed. “Ask me no further questions, Mr. Ord. My husband is alive! *I love my husband!*”

There was nothing angry in her voice, it was very sad and very sweet, but there was a firmness in its tone which brought conviction.

“Farewell,” she said at length; “until you have left Sandrock I shall not quit my chamber. Forgive me—forget me.”

She turned to go up the steep terraces. He walked in silence by her side. When they had nearly reached the top, she paused upon the spot, whence on the night he had seen her on the lawn, he had watched her. He was trying to conceal his tears, but she remarked them. It is so painful, on such occasions, to see a man weep.

“Mrs. Leonard,” said he, “one word before I leave you. Is there nothing I can ever do to make you happy? I ask nothing for myself.”

“Think as kindly of me as you can. Believe that I have given you less pain than I suffer. One of these days, when you are married, we may meet again.”

My father winced as if the very thought of his marriage were suffering.

“I know,” said she, “you think my words unkind; nevertheless I trust the time may come when you will remember, either with pleasure or indifference, that I anticipated your marriage.”

“Oh, Amabel!” said he, “I cannot bear to give you up. To know that you are living here, in the midst of danger and

of difficulty, with Bevis near you. Let me stay here and be your friend. Do not send me away. Let me protect you."

"Our God is my protector," she said, solemnly. "Theodosius, we have taken sweet counsel together; we have walked in the House of God as friends. In thinking of me remember only such hours. Farewell!"

She was gone! The sun had set! Twilight had lost its rosy glow, and deepened into darkness. He walked back to the rustic bench where she had sat, and gathered up the flowers she had scattered on the ground.

CHAPTER IX.

Fasten your souls so high that constantly
The sound of your heroic cheer may float
Above all floods of earthly agonies,—
Purification being the joy of pain.

ELIZABETH BARRETT BROWNING.

"WHO, passing through the Vale of Misery, make it a well; the rain thereof filleth the pools." This beautiful verse of Scripture may be called a sort of motto to Amabel's thoughts as she quitted the cottage, on the following afternoon, equipped for walking. My father had received from her on the previous evening a packet containing his portfolio. No note or message accompanied the verses, but some pages of the manuscript were blistered by fresh tears. He returned her a short note in which, conscientiously avoiding all expressions of attachment, he informed her that being desirous to consult her pleasure, he should go to town by the mail of the next evening, and trusted that this arrangement would not confine her all the next day, as she had threatened, to the house, as he would make no further attempt to seek an interview.

She had received a message from a sick woman at Churt, a small hamlet lying in exactly an opposite direction to the Hill Farm. To reach it from the cottage she had to pass over the wildest and most desolate part of the heath. Churt was ap-

proached by no high road, and was nearly three miles from the village. The case appeared to be one of pressing necessity, and reassured by the promise of my father that he would not try to meet her, she started alone about six o'clock, to cross this tract of desolation.

"Who, passing through the Vale of Misery, make it a well; the rain thereof filleth the pools." Thus said her heart. The thought became a prayer, the prayer a prophecy, from which she turned to the records of her life, and found the truth the Psalmist taught was written there.

Why, in this world, is there sorrow upon sorrow? Why?—ah! why? Each thinking soul is sooner or later startled by this question. Sermons are preached, and books are written on the subject, and others try to force on us their own conclusions. It is of little use. Each must answer the great question for himself.

Amabel walked on, trying to find her answer, and her thoughts resulted in a paradox. Sorrow is essential to perfection; therefore, is necessary to happiness.

"Will not this view," thought she, "account in part for the strange truth, that of sorrow it may be said, 'to him that hath shall be given?' The purest, holiest, best of men—those whom *we* should think least needing the discipline of grief, are often those most called on to suffer and endure."

"Ah!" she thought, "how different is man's judgment from God's judgment—our finite benevolence from the benevolence of infinity. If an unlimited power of conferring happiness and of remedying evil were bestowed on one of us, how would he fly at once to make the crooked paths straight, and the rough places plain. He would restore me to the arms of my dear husband; the mother weeping over her dead son would embrace a living child; the sickly would be healthy; Lazarus sit in purple beside Dives:—and our Father in Heaven has the *power* to do this, and not the *will*. Is His benevolence less than our common impulses of kindness? Or rather is it not *love* that will not heed our hearts' desire: wisdom that withholdeth the request of our lips?"

"After all," said Amabel, "as we advance in life, what thing

that we possess would we relinquish the least willingly? Is it not our *experience in sorrow*? Who would be willing to have subtracted from himself all he has learnt from trial? Who would not tremble at the thought of being cut off from the power of heart sympathy—from his fellowship in that freemasonry whereby hearts recognise each other's discipline in the great school of adversity?"

"Patience is bitter, but bears sweet fruits," says the Arab proverb.

Horace always said, that Amabel was like those bees which gather honey from stinging nettles.

She could not look into the past without seeing that the previous sorrows of her life had been her best preparation for her present disappointment. The first, real, bitter grief is a thousand fold the worst to bear, because it brings a sense of insecurity, and lets the daylight of reality break in upon delusions. "We fear and hate," says the author of *Yeast*, "the utterly unknown, and it only." A second sorrow finds us more prepared. We have the remains of our entrenched position, thrown up in fear and haste when the first invader came, to depend on and retire to.

• So Amabel, though—as she had said to my father—the sudden slaughter of her hopes was terrible to bear, was by no means so unhappy as we have already seen her. Her present position, her present interests in life, were not affected by this disappointment. She was called upon only to sacrifice her dreams.

"I cannot understand," she said to herself, "why Mr. Ord is always pitying me for the petty annoyances of my present position. If he only knew how much more dreadful it is to be adrift on the great ocean of life without any responsibilities, any duties, any ties."

She thanked God, who had hired her into His vineyard, who had given her work—"work, at any price;"—for the sense of independence that comes from hearty labor, and the interest it awakens if undertaken aright.

"Ah!" she said, smiling at her own conceit, "is not life, after all, a tangled mass of sea-weed, such as the ocean throws

up everywhere along its shore. When we separate a portion from the rest, and dip it again into its element, how beautiful is every fragment we have rescued! We regret that our time by the sea-side is so short, that we can never half develope or investigate the portion we have grasped out of the thick of the vast mass that we must abandon. It is in the world of human interests as it is in the world of nature."

As she thought thus, she began to feel that her basket was heavy on her arm, she set it down upon the turf. Her puppy, scenting something savory within, and perceiving that his mistress was gazing at the sky, got his nose in, when Amabel, recalled to present interests, resumed her burthen. The puppy had broken in upon her pleasant thoughts. She suddenly woke up to a sickening sense of fear, like the first consciousness of danger felt by one who has reached the worst part of some frightful path, from which there is no retiring. A horror of great loneliness fell upon her. She looked around. She was terrified by the extent of the unbroken moor, its stillness and desolation. She had never before been out alone upon the heath at so late an hour. She had not thought of this when she left home in the broad sunshine, but now the God of Day was hastening to the west, and she was only half across the heath; it would be dark when she reached Churt. She feared to go back; and she dared not go on. All around her stretched brown, barren, and desolate, miles of unbroken moorland; not a living creature was in sight, not a habitation, nor a tree. She tried to recall some of the thoughts that had so lately occupied her. They would not come. She watched the sun setting behind her in a haze of golden light, and tried to fix her heart upon that verse of Isaiah, "The glory of the Lord shall be thy rear-ward."

It would not do. The fear was physical, partly induced, perhaps, by the long agitation of her nerves. It was a horror of loneliness: such a horror as we feel in dreams, when space seems spreading into an infinite vastness. The horror that falls upon children in the dark, which is not so much a terror of *obscurity*, as of space without apparent limit. It is a horror of the same kind as that physical fear with which some persons

look on death, a dread of going *alone* into the Dark Valley, of passing *alone* through ways untried.

She was upon the edge of a wide, still, deep pond, nearly a mile in circuit, and it suddenly occurred to her that a fair was to be held in a few days upon its borders. She remembered some horrible stories of violence and wrong that had been lately current in the village. She felt the insufficiency of her dogs as a protection: the puppy was an arrant coward, and Barba was too old and too small to be of any use to her. She looked around with nervous apprehension; nothing stirred, save the shadows that the clouds cast over the dreary moorland.

"Oh!" she exclaimed, crossing herself for fear, moved by an impulse derived from her Catholic experience in her old childish days. "I do not wonder men are so much bolder than women;—the worst that can befall *them* is to be murdered by some ruffian"

As she said so, the figure of a man started up before her on the path—she did not see whence he came. Her first feeling was one of relief at seeing a human being. Then the blood rushed back from her heart, and she sickened with terror.

He was a villanous-looking wretch, whose shaggy whiskers, swarthy complexion, and red neck-handkerchief, betokened something of the gipsy. He eyed the dogs keenly, with some contempt, and stared Amabel hard in the face, as he brushed by. A moment after, as she was hurrying on, with a sigh of relief for her escape, her arms were seized roughly from behind.

"Piero!—At him!" she cried. But the puppy stood still upon the path, and on the gipsy's threatening him with his foot he ran away.

"Now, my mistress, out with your cash; that dog won't let fly at me," said the footpad with a laugh.

"Let go my arms, then," she exclaimed. "I have only three shillings; take that and begone."

"You have got to give me all these gimcracks," he said, pulling at her watch-chain.

"Oh! not that," she cried. "Please—pray, not that. I have some money at home I will"

But she stopped. Her conscientiousness suggested that this

money might be of great use in some emergency. Had she the right to give it to redeem her watch, even though that watch had been her husband's wedding gift—though a little superstition connected its possession with her hopes for the future? The ruffian snatched it from her side. She moaned as if a part of herself were torn away.

"Now, your rings;" said he.

"I have but one," she cried, "my wedding ring. You could not take a woman's wedding ring away!"

"Give it me—and be quick!"

She would not take off her glove. She started back, and screamed with all her force. She had a vague idea that deliverance might come in some shape,—that some other person might be lurking by the pond. The fellow cursed her for her screams. He made an attempt to seize her hand and wrench the ring from her finger; but, failing to do this, he struck her over the head with a thick stick, and ran away.

Neither he nor Amabel had observed that, at the beginning of their colloquy, a horseman had appeared above a hilly ridge, about a quarter of a mile from them. From the top of any rising ground, in that clear atmosphere, one can see distinctly to an almost incredible distance.

My father sat upon his horse at the top of the brown hillock, clear against the sky, like a statue of bronze. He had a small ship's spy-glass in his hand. He had ridden off the high road to take one last long look, from that position, at the Cottage. After gazing at it for a moment, his eye fell on the foreground of the landscape, on the two human figures in the long heatherless green track which served for a road across the common. Instantly, with a speed that no one but a sailor could have got out of his pony, he came galloping down hill to the rescue. The ruffian, intent upon his object, and secure in the unbroken solitude of that desolate district, did not perceive his approach, until her scream, which he fancied was a call upon this person for help. He struck her, hoping her deliverer would pause and raise her, and being occupied with her, would have no time for attempting an arrest. He was mistaken. A desire for his capture and his punishment—that desire for pursuit which is

said to be man's strongest natural propensity—took possession of my father.

He swerved his pony to the left, to cut off the retreat of the rascal. He came up with him. He caught at him, and would have captured him had the pony been less hard in the mouth. But it was impossible to stop it at the right moment. It made a sudden bound, as its rider tried to pull it in, and the collar of the gipsy slipped through my father's fingers. He could spend no more time in trying to arrest the criminal. He saw Amabel, slowly rising from the turf. Perceiving she was safe, he got off his pony to find what the robber, as he came up with him, had thrown away. The dogs ran up; and presently he saw Barba, who had been taught to fetch and carry, dragging something through the heather. He found a watch in the mouth of the little animal. The case had started open; and, as he took it in his hand, the inscription met his eye, "*Amabel Warner, from her husband Leonard Warner.*"

For a moment he was perfectly stunned. His first clear thought was one of amazement at his own obtuseness. Why, had he never perceived the truth before? It was plain to him at once. And, yet, it was not plain. He did not understand it, though memory poured in upon him, like a flood, words and events

Which leave upon the still susceptible sense
A message undelivered, till the mind
Awakes to apprehensiveness and takes it.

He went up to her, where she sat by the road side feebly supporting her head upon her hands. Her bonnet was off; and her long hair unbound, stirred by the evening wind, waved lightly on her shoulders.

"Are you much hurt?" said he. "Were you much frightened, Mrs. Warner?"

As he came up to her he had been arranging this little sentence. It was better at once she should know of his discovery.

She looked up. He put the watch into her lap, and repeated his inquiry.

"I feel very faint," said she.

"Lean on me," said my father. "Lean your head upon my shoulder."

He sat down by her. She hesitated, and did not take advantage of his offer; but her Newfoundland puppy running up and putting his paws upon her knees, she clasped him round the neck and laid her head on his.

"When did you find it out?" she said, in a faint voice, without looking at my father.

"When I picked up the watch. Believe me—on my honor, Mrs. Warner, I had not suspected it before."

"And what do you think of me now?"

"I think that neither my cousin nor I have ever been rightly informed as to the story. Knowing you as I do, I feel it is impossible. Amabel, give me your word. It is impossible they could have been right in all they said of you?"

"You thought it true at Foxley," said Amabel. And she repeated all that she had heard him say upon that dreadful night when he and the young officer of artillery arranged the duel.

"Is it possible you heard us? Were you so near and in distress?"

"I am not Oh! it shames me even to say that *I am not*—I am not what they said of me," she cried, hiding her face still closer than before, while her very neck, and ears, and fingers flushed. "Mr. Ord, I feel fallen very low, so low that I am constrained to fear that you may not believe me. Matters of fact you and my husband may yet, I trust, investigate, and prove that I am true; but, whether I tell a lie in my heart, laboring to impress on you the idea of a purity I had not, the Lord be judge."

"I did not ask of you," said he, "such solemn words. The woman I have loved could not be It is so strangely difficult to reconcile it to my mind that you are she."

"You mean you have always been so sure of the worthlessness of Mrs. Warner?"

He would not tell a falsehood even to himself, and persuade himself he had not always condemned her; but he laid his

hand upon the little hand that wore the wedding ring, and whispered, "But not now."

"Yes," she said, repeating a thought upon which she loved to ring the changes: "one can place more confidence in persons than in circumstances. I am comforted to think that you can trust me now."

He thought it strange that in her most excited moments she so frequently became reflective; not knowing that this is oftentimes the case with those whose range of reading or of thought has been larger than that of their experience. To such, an abstract truth, held fast and applied in any present strait, brings often a strange strength and comfort.

"You see the cruel mistake I fell into," said she. "I persuaded myself you must have recognised me. I remembered you, though I had seen you but once. I fancied he was going to forgive me, and had sent you here to bring him a report of me. How came it that my name, which is so uncommon, did not at once betray me?"

"Which—Leonard or Amabel?"

"Both!" she replied.

"I asked you once, you remember, if you were related to the Suffolk Leonards, and you answered in the affirmative."

"That was true. They are connexions of my husband. Old Mrs. Warner was a Leonard."

"As to your Christian name—when he spoke of you to me, he called you Belle or Bella."

"True—true!" she interrupted; "Belle was always the name he called me. He never called me Amabel; and for that reason I cannot bear that any one but he should call me Belle. I have no pet name now."

"I took it for granted that Belle stood for Isabella," said my father. "I thought she was a foreigner—but you are English. I had formed such a different idea of her; I could not associate her with you."

She rose up quietly, and turned towards home. He slipped one arm through the bridle of his horse, while, with the other, he supported her. She was too weak to walk alone.

Many were the pauses in their walk, and many a mouthful

of grass the pony cropped by the wayside, as she told him her story. When she came to speak of the abduction of Felix Guiscard he broke in, eager to exonerate Captain Warner. She heard all he could tell her of the mistake made at Valetta with a piteous smile. "It matters little now," said she; "I trust characters rather than circumstances. I have long been sure that either Captain Warner was not concerned in the affair, or that he had sufficient reason for his conduct. But you see," she added, with a sudden burst of grief, "you see how ready I was once, I—his wife—to mistrust him and to wrong him!"

When she spoke of old Mrs. Warner, and of the sorrows of her early married life, Theodosius was unmeasured in his expressions of indignation.

"You could not have been subject to her. You could not have lived with her. She is enough to exhaust the patience of the angels."

"Let us hope not," she answered. "She is dead. I read her death in last week's paper."

"But," said he, when she had done, "why let Warner believe the things he does of you? I do not see you were to blame at all; but, at any rate, it is neither for his honor nor for yours, that things should stand as they are."

"But I wrote to him—I sent him an explanation," she cried, with a bitterness that showed the deepest of her griefs was now disclosed, "and he took no notice of my letter."

"Shall I write?" said Theodosius.

"Would it be of any use?"

"I do not know. If I could see him, a few words might set him right. I would appeal to his affectionate heart, and to his manly generosity. I should not fear. He is a man peculiarly susceptible to eloquence, because that excites the feelings; but I never knew him much affected by a letter. The necessity of picking his way along a written sheet, appears to cool his blood."

"That is very true," said Amabel; "I have noticed that often, and I have thought it very strange. Impressions deepen with me, long after personal influence has been withdrawn. It is so in this instance. If he could look into my heart! You are convinced, are you not, that I do truly love him?"

"Alas, yes!" he said. He had already felt it to be true, and in that brief "alas!" betrayed his love. He felt her arm drawn quickly from his own.

"Perhaps," she said, as she withdrew a little from his side, "perhaps you don't believe me. You may think I am light-minded. I cannot—it is not in my nature to have no human interests. I am not one of those calm superior women who live in an atmosphere above our earth. This one great grief has not yet blighted all the pretty flowers that bloom along my path. If I again were Leonard's wife, I should have a thousand happinesses at once. I should not be afraid of loving you and Horace. Now I am struggling to appear what I am not, cold and indifferent, when so many are kind to me."

Nothing she could have said would have so thoroughly convinced him of her innocence, and of the necessity of conquering his own feelings, as this simple expression of regard for her two lovers.

He took her hand, and stood still in the middle of the path.

"I have no need to tell you that I have given up my dearest hopes—that the wife of my cousin is sacred in my eyes."

In the expression of her face he read a calm of *course*. She expected every man to do his duty. That Theodosius should do his was no matter of surprise. And he, while flattered in one sense by her innocent confidence in his integrity, felt pained that she did not understand that he was suffering. Alas! how seldom, when we make a strong effort to do right, have we the comfort of knowing that any eyes but those of angels watch the struggle.

He went on.

"Will you hear me assure you, before God, that the dearest wish I now dare to entertain is, that I may be instrumental in restoring you to your husband? Will you depend on me? For the present I will go away, because the solemn vow that I now take binds me to protect you. I begin by protecting you *from myself*. I shall plunge into new interests in London. I will silence the voice of my own heart, by making books: as hundreds have done before, and thousands will do yet. When am calm, I shall come back. Meanwhile, promise me that,

should anything happen to interrupt your present life—should any case arise in which you stand in need of friendship or protection, you will send for me. Remember, I am Warner's nearest friend—his friend and his cousin."

"And here we part," he said, finding they had reached the cottage gate. "But, Mrs. Warner——,"

"Call me Mrs. Leonard," she said, "as hitherto."

"I think that in giving up your married name, a great mistake was committed."

"So my step-father told me at the time. But I was so ignorant of things three years ago, and so very anxious to show my readiness to obey *him*."

"Promise me," said my father, taking her hands, and gazing earnestly by the pale light of a young moon into her face, "promise me to consider me your friend and counsellor. Promise to send for me if you are in any trouble. Promise to think of me sometimes."

With that he opened the heavy gate. She went through, thinking he was about to follow her, but it swung to behind her. Before she could open it, to bid him a kind farewell, to tell him how entirely she trusted him, he had mounted the pony.

He saw her wave him the farewell he dared not trust himself to hear her speak. And as he rode away in haste, without reply, she was half disposed to think she had offended him. A troubled feeling remained after this interview, a fear lest he must certainly despise her. As often as it rose, she put it down by prayer and by reflection. It was her rule never to indulge a painful fancy; she wanted all her strength to expend on actual cares.

CHAPTER X.

Elle se vengea de sa destinée, qui lui refusait le bonheur pour elle-même, en se consumant pour le bonheur des autres.—LAMARTINE of *Mad. Roland*.

So, Theodosius Ord went up to the great metropolis. Sucked into the Maelstrom, he whirled and tossed amongst his fellow

straws. He took a dingy lodging in a close and murky street, and knew something of the ordeal of hot ploughshares, as day after day he trod the burning summer pavement searching for a publisher. Had he been a necessitous adventurer, dependent on literature as a profession, his portfolio might have contained poems a thousand-fold better than any that were there, and yet have lain in manuscript for ever. But he had private means, and was willing to advance a hundred pounds upon the risk of publication, so that the verses got at last set up in type, and made their appearance in the world of letters. There was vast pleasure to my father in seeing his verses through the press, in correcting the proof-sheets, and in distributing with lavish hand, copies of the work with inscriptions "from the author."

There is, in every case, a little circle in which the first work of a new author is fondled at its birth, and where its reception is by no means an earnest of the treatment it will meet, when, poor little vessel of earth, it takes its chance amongst the iron pots made to outlast the century. Alas! after a year has passed, of such ventures as my father's how rarely there remains even a shred!

A vast deal has been shrieked, and said, and sung, about the cruelties of critics; strictures which, in my opinion (considering what harsh judgments *we*, private critics, in our private life, pass daily on each other), are extremely undeserved.

I do not mean to say that no Mr. Bludyer mangled with savage ruthlessness my father's little volume; that no shabby little paper, of the baser sort, having been overlooked by the publisher, hired the work, and revenged itself upon its author; but when we think of the mass of stupidity and trash shovelled in weekly on the critic by profession, to be examined without loss of time, and set up on the shelf to which his judgment may assign it, I think we shall acknowledge that the real worker in the hive stings oftentimes less severely than the drones—that criticisms by pens that write for bread are kinder than those pronounced by the tongues of the *dilettanti*.

So my father rolled out of blankets and warm feathers into his plunge bath, being suffered to indulge himself in the

hope that his poems were succeeding, until he came to inquire—*if they sold.*

He had had the presentation copy he designed for Amabel bound in green morocco; and though, as he walked down with it to the Spread Eagle, in Gracechurch street, he repeated, smiling to himself,—

“Ha! some one has robbed me—” “I pity your grief.”

“Of my manuscript verses!” “I pity the thief!”

he suffered unusual anxieties until he heard of its arrival.

She wrote at once to acknowledge it. Her letter was very kind, gentle, and full of interest in his success. She said that everything was going on as usual at Sandrock. She did *not* say that her spirits and her health began to fail. That there were moments when life itself seemed to hang upon the chance of rest or change; that Olivia was giving her inconceivable anxiety; and that of late, in her brief moments of repose, when her soul strayed wearily into the “land of vision,” it sought in preference the place of tombs. She would fancy herself dead—fancy her troubles over—her soul at rest, and Leonard happy—the stain her memory left behind upon his life, washed from the world’s sight by his marriage with another.

Autumn had come—coal smoke, and the first fog. The Junior United Service Club had not then been established, and my father found himself horribly lonely in his lodgings. He wrote upon the subject to Amabel. He quoted to her Lord Byron’s famous passage about the solitude of a crowd. She replied, by recommending him to walk out into the streets, and seize on the first interest that came to hand. “Follow it up,” said she, “and it will lead you, before you are aware, into a tangled mass of human interests, in the midst of which your only difficulty will be to hold on steadily to the one that first attracted you. I am a good deal of Diderot’s opinion, that only the wicked can be solitary. The controversy between the Encyclopædia and Jean Jacques, upon the subject, was a favorite theme with my poor friend, Dr. Glascock, who always asserted, with Rousseau, that the solitary, by choice, are commonly humane and benevolent, since whoever suffices for himself, has no disposition to hurt another. For his own part,

he used to say, he preferred living separated from the wicked, to living amongst them and hating them. In all of which arguments, you will perceive, that each party fired wide of the truths held by the other. And now I speak of Dr. Glascock—let me say that which my courage has failed me to say hitherto: would you be willing to write to him, and try to get from him some account of my early life in Malta? Much of what afterwards happened hinges upon that part of my story: and when I am permitted to exculpate myself to my husband, I should like him to have every word I say confirmed and corroborated.”

Upon that hint my father wrote to Malta, and obtained, though not till some months had elapsed, that Narrative, by Dr. Glascock, which I have used so freely in the first part of this volume. He did not, however, act on her advice, in regard to the living interests around him. His soul was animated with poetical ambition, and in that day (amongst his class of poets) poetry was by no means educed “out of emotion excited by action recollected in tranquillity,” but from visions evoked out of the “vasty deep,” disdaining all connexion with the red clay of humanity, having as little as possible to do with what was real. So my father, not knowing that in the low and swampy places of the earth the poet will find most luxuriance, gave no heed to her advice, as he pondered his new poem.

It was to be an Eastern tale—the East being a sort of poet’s storehouse of romance, after the publication of *Lalla Rookh*, the *Corsair*, and *Giaour*. To be sure, my father knew as little of the East as I know of the manners, customs, habits of thought, and social prejudices of the inhabitants of Dahomey; but that was rather an advantage than otherwise—the *fanciful*, not the *vrai-semblable*, being all that was necessary. Amongst the multitude of poetasters who wrote upon the East, few gave to the subject any preparatory study. My father laid in a stock of *bulbuls* and of *yataghans*; called his heroine *Zaïda*; and having composed the first canto of his work, bethought himself of applying to his publisher. He found one night, on returning to his lodgings, the following communication:—

DEAR SIR,

We beg to thank you for your very obliging offer of your new volume of poems. The issue of the publication of the "*Lazy Longings*" is, however, so little encouraging, and we so sincerely regret the unsatisfactory result to yourself, that we have not courage to undertake another book in these unfavorable times, on the same terms, from the same author. Accept our best thanks, nevertheless, for the courtesy which led you to propose it to us. We trust in other hands you may be more fortunate.

Your obedient Servants

BACON AND BUNGAY.

T. Ord, Esq.

Inclosed was the account. Only thirty-eight copies had been sold out of five hundred, and of twenty-six of these he himself had been the purchaser. He took out his newspapers, re-studied the verdict of his critics, and was convinced that they had not taken so unfavorable a view of his work as the man of business. But, after all, the *business* brought him to his senses; he could not afford to lose for Zaida's sake another hundred guineas. He took up the despised "*Longings*," but found himself actually sick of his own poems.

"No man, I presume," said he, "can read any work of profane literature, day after day, and not get bored by it."

He forgot Shakspeare; and the world, as yet, knew nothing of its Thackeray.

He put on his dressing-gown; he treated with a sad and subdued kindness the maid of all work who brought him up his tea, and who habitually put him out of temper by her womanly propensity for setting to rights his books and papers, or rather, as he called it, "for putting things *to wrongs*." He poured all the tea into one large basin; set it to cool upon the fireplace; put his feet upon the fender; poked a black coal with his foot; and, running his fingers through his hair, sat in moody meditation.

And here, I remember, I have never yet described him.

He belonged to a tall and light-haired race. He himself was too tall, he used to say, for a naval man. His intimates in after years called him the Viking; and, indeed, there is a tradition that our family has descended from some Sweyn or Friothulf,

who led a colony of his countrymen to the Northumbrian shore. His hair was of a rare golden hue, very thick and closely curled. It lay in heavy masses, piled up over his head, and shading his brow and temples. His eyes were of a peculiar, soft, golden-streaked hazel, with lashes much darker than his hair. These eyes and his chin were the two handsome features of his face; the latter was dimpled *à la Napolienne*. But his chief charm was his voice, clear, rich, and full. Above the wildest storm he could hail the main-top without a trumpet; yet it was distinct, ringing, soft, and manageable in its lowest tones.

As he sat before his fire, he heard a sudden loud knocking and ringing. Persons were heard coming up the staircase. A voice, in rather a provoked tone, said, "That will do—that will do, my good girl. I don't want your assistance; I can do very well."

The door of the room burst open, and the maid of all work entered, leading Horace Vane. "There, sir—there. Sit down. Here's a chair," said she, almost thrusting him into it.

"What brings you here, old fellow?" cried my father.

"*She* sent me," replied Horace. "She wants to see you at once. She says you have promised to be her friend, and you and I are to manage for her. *You* and *I*, Theodosius."

"What has happened?" said my father, "make haste and tell me."

"Bevis has eloped with Miss Olivia."

"Is that all?" cried my father. "I was afraid it was something a great deal worse."

"There is something worse behind," said Horace. "Captain Talbot is given over; on hearing the news he had another paralytic stroke. I cannot tell what she will do. Her health is failing—and to have all that family thrown upon her hands—"

"Her health! Has she been ill?"

"Not ill, but ailing. As she says, one would compound for a dangerous fever once a year, if it could buy off the dreadful feeling of being just not equal to the claims of every day. Olivia's behavior has told terribly upon her."

"He will marry her of course," said my father, after a pause. "He could have found no attraction but her property."

"Amabel, however, has her doubts about the marriage. That is exactly what she wants of you and me. Olivia is twenty, and her four thousand pounds next year will be quite in her own power. He may want to get it from her, and then——, at any rate, Amabel does not trust him, and she wants us both either to get her back or to see them married properly."

"Do you know anything about them? Where did they go?" exclaimed my father.

"Bevis has been in the habit, since you left, of constantly spending his nights out in the market town. I did not mind it much; for, had he been at home, he would probably have been playing his buffoon tricks to an admiring audience of clowns at Cæsar's alehouse. The evenings he was over there I spent with Amabel, and was engaged during the day in training, for her use, a forest pony: I was, formerly, considered a good horse-man, and I find I can still ride, accompanied by a groom. Amabel has not been able to walk much. She is pale, languid, easily fatigued, and I fancied if I could train a gentle pony for her use——"

"Go on!" exclaimed my father.

"Last night," continued Horace, "Bevis did not come home. I thought little of his absence till I received a message from Amabel this morning, begging me to come to her at once, and send off some one for the doctor. I found the clergyman already there. The captain was lying speechless, having been too suddenly informed of the elopement. Olivia appeared to have been gone since daybreak, leaving a rather impertinent note behind, which was not shown me. Amabel sent me off at once for you. I took the cross-roads to Guilford, having got information which led me to suppose I was in the track of them. Bevis drove her in a gig from the Bush Inn, and they had some hours' start of me. At Guilford they had hired a post-chaise. Just as I got there the coach drove up. I got upon the top, leaving the groom to take back the horses. We travelled faster than they. By the help of a sharp boy, whom I found upon the coach, I made inquiries. We came up with them at Kingston, where they had gone into the inn to dine, and had ordered a wedding-cake from the confectioner. Know-

ing Miss Olivia's taste for eating, I fancy they will be detained. If you come on at once we may probably intercept them. They are taking no precautions of any kind."

"Come on then," said my father. "How shall we go?"

"Better ride."

Horses were soon procured. After proceeding with some caution till they left behind the lights of London, they crossed Putney bridge, passed the house which was once the head-quarters of the great Oliver, and began to quicken their speed.

Not a word to each other—they kept the great pace
Neck by neck, stride by stride, never changing their place.

They found themselves at length on open ground, completely out of the dense London atmosphere—

"The shining lamps in Jove's high house were lit."

"We are on Wimbledon Common," said my father.

"Hark!" replied Horace. "I hear something advancing in the distance. Pull up your horse. I think it is the carriage."

CHAPTER XI.

"Every disease has its remedy except for folly; that alone is incurable." The Prophet, on whom be peace, has also said, "Folly is the commonest portion of mankind."

TURKISH BOOK.

HORACE was right. There was a carriage on the road, but whether it contained the runaways, the eyes of my father could not determine. Horace proposed to ride on to Kingston, and see whether the fugitives had left there.

"That will never do," said my father. "We passed the place a mile from here, where the road becomes two branches, and it will be impossible, in the dark, to guess whether they have taken the one that runs through Putney or that by the Elephant and Castle. Whatever we do, do not let us lose sight of the carriage."

They had turned their horses as it passed, and were following it at a smart trot. Suddenly all doubt was removed by a sharp shriek. "It is they!" exclaimed Horace. "What can he be doing to her! It is the voice of Olivia!"

They spurred on, but the nearer they approached the louder and more piercing grew the shrieks. Just as they got up abreast of the carriage, Bevis, who was not without a certain kind of pluck, let down the glass, and thrust his head out of the window.

"I have no money with me!" he exclaimed, "but I have pistols, and am prepared to use them."

My father pulled up. "By George!" he cried to Horace, "they have taken us for highwaymen."

Once more they headed the postillion.

"Stop, man!" cried my father to the post-boy. "Stop, if you have any sense left, and tell those fools inside that we have no intention of harming them."

Sure that after such galloping they would find it necessary to rest at the next post-house, the horsemen then made the best of their way in advance of the carriage; and, alighting on the outskirts of Putney, at a neat little roadside tavern, asked for the best parlor, and summoned the landlady. She came up to them at once, a dapper chipper little woman, with a very pretty face, and a certain rotundity of figure. My father, who was innocent of all diplomacy, and who in any difficulty trusted always to a free, frank explanation of the circumstances to bear him through, took her aside and told her the whole story. Just as he had finished, they heard the post-chaise that contained the frightened travellers driving up to the inn door.

"Now, my dear good woman," said my father, hearing Bevis calling out at the bar below for stiff brandy and water, "be discreet. Go down and ask the lady up. We are her best friends—we mean well by her. We do not even mean to separate her from her lover. Here is my card. You see I am a lieutenant of the navy. This young gentleman is the son of one of our great merchants in India. We had rather see her without the man who is with her. And we wish you to stay in the room."

Thus directed, the landlady went down to the front door, and

found Olivia protesting that she would go no further on that road; that it was quite dark; that she had been frightened to death by robbers; and she would only travel by day.

"Better come up and rest, Miss," said the landlady.

At the word *Miss*, Olivia tossed her head. "I must consult my husband," she replied.

But the consulting was only a farce, for a moment after, in spite of all he could say to dissuade her, she got out, and leaving him to dismiss the chaise, followed the landlady.

The door of the small parlor opened, and she stood face to face with my father and Horace Vane.

Olivia's shrewdness seldom deserted her. She stepped back, crying to the landlady, "Why do you harbor such people? They are robbers! They are robbers!"

"You know better than that, Miss Talbot," said my father. "I am sent to you by your family."

But Olivia began again to scream and call on Bevis. "My husband! My husband!"

My father took her by the arm, and begged her to be quiet, but she struggled so vehemently, that he let her go. By this time up came Bevis, armed with Dutch courage, with the brandy and water glass still in his hand.

"We are here by the authority of her sister, sir, and Captain Talbot," said my father. "Miss Olivia, do you know your father is dying? You have killed your father."

"Then he ought not to have set *her* over me," said Olivia. "A pretty thing, indeed, for *her* to talk about elopements; when her husband caught her one night in the act of running off with a French officer."

"You know, Olivia, that that is false," cried the two friends of Amabel at once. My father, because he knew the truth; Horace, because *he felt* such a deed on her part was impossible.

"I am the nearest friend and relative of Captain Warner," cried my father, "and know all about that affair. You know well, or ought to know, Miss Talbot, that she was simply setting off to join her husband."

"I don't see, then, why he turned her off," said Olivia, with a quiet sneer.

My father was very angry ; the more so because this fool of a girl had the best of the argument.

In his narrative he breaks out at this point, as was too much his wont, into reflections.

"I had not learned," says he, "the lesson Amabel was always learning.

"'The deed once done, no power can abrogate,' is old Pindar's expression of a truth, which, though by no means generally admitted now, seems to have been pretty well settled in the public mind in his time.

"'That our works do follow us,'—not merely into the next world, but throughout our stay in the present. That God himself will not check the working of His laws, and stand between a man and the natural consequences of his own misbehavior. That even repentance will not lay the evil spirits of our evil actions. From David's time to ours, each wrong has had its consequences. The transgressor may, struggling against the evil in which he has involved himself, come out of the conflict a better man than he went in ; but he will never be the same man that he would have been, but for his fault. He will never be suffered to pluck out the thorn he stuck into his own pillow.

"At this time," continues my father, "I did not understand this in the least. I thought it just, that when a man was sorry for a fault, he should be relieved from his liabilities. I forgot that, though with care and pains a crew may plug a shot-hole, you can never make the ship's hull sound, till she has been hauled into dock again. Nor did I see that it was just that, when Amabel had committed a little fault, she should have the credit of a great one,—that having been a careless wife, she should be supposed unfaithful. As if we could estimate the mischief done to others by each fault, and portion out its fitting retribution."

"It is an astonishment to me, Miss Olivia," said my father, frank in his anger, "that you, who certainly would not have troubled yourself, from generous motives, to keep sacred the secrets and the reputation of your sister, should not long ago have shouted, on the housetops of your neighborhood, your version of the separation."

"That is another instance," cried Olivia, "of her falsehood and injustice. She told me once that if I did not hold my tongue upon that subject—if I succeeded in making the public think as ~~bad~~ of her as I do—I might be sure the mischief would recoil upon myself, for that no one then would wish to marry me. You see now what an untruth she told," continued Olivia, triumphantly, "for Bevis found it out, and yet is content to have me."

"You need not flatter yourself, Mr. Bevis," cried my father, "that you have shown magnanimity in proposing to marry the sister of such a woman—a woman who is a lady and a wife of whom the proudest might be proud. I am not going to insult her, by hinting that her behavior need be defended to you and Miss Olivia. And now, sir, if you will be pleased to step aside, and leave me alone a moment with this lady, I will call you when we have ascertained on what she chooses to decide."

"No—my Bevis—my Bevis—never shall they part us!" cried Olivia, flinging herself into his arms. "Tyrants! never shall you tear me from my husband."

"*That* is exactly what I want to ascertain," said my father. "You are *not* married, I know. When do you propose to be? That you dare to intend anything else," he added, turning to Bevis, "I do not venture to imagine. She is an officer's daughter—and has friends, sir."

"Of course—that is, of course not," said the tutor. "Miss Olivia has intrusted her happiness to me, and you see it is very expensive, and, I think, very disreputable, to make a journey into Scotland. Miss Olivia would be very safe in London with my friends for a few weeks—till a residence——"

"You d——d rascally scoundrel!" cried my father. "Olivia Talbot, do you hear this man? It is evident that he has marked you out for ruin. Come back with us to Sandrock—to your old father who is dying—to the friends who care for your true good."

But Olivia drew back from the hand that he held out, and cried, clinging to Bevis, "I will stay with him—nothing shall part us."

"Come back to Sandrock," cried my father. "If this man can be *bought over* to marry you, I promise the consent of your family to the union."

"I would not go back to Sandrock, if I were to be married the very next minute," cried Olivia. "I can trust Mr. Bevis, and you have no authority over us. Go away."

"Mr. Bevis, I desire *you* to leave this room," said my father. But Bevis sprang at him, and seized him by the collar. My father was the taller man, Bevis the more powerful. They had a tussle of some moments, each trying to push the other out of the door.

Olivia began to shriek again. Such shrill and horrid shrieks! They brought part of the population of Putney out of their beds, and quite a crowd assembled round the inn, who took the part of the runaways, vociferating that the lady should not be ill used—they intended to prevent it—and calling for a constable to break in the door.

"Dear heart," said the landlady, alarmed for the respectability of her inn, "Can't you, sir, (to my father) calm the people outside?"

You could get my father to do anything by making an appeal to him for assistance. He ran to a window in the front of the house, and throwing it open, confronted the sympathizers, assuring them that there was no cause for apprehension—that the lady was under the protection of her friends, but was rather excitable. Just at that moment, Horace came behind him, and desired him to send at once for a doctor. Olivia had fallen in a fit. My father, exceedingly alarmed, sent off for the nearest surgeon. Hastening back into the room, where Bevis and Olivia had been left, they found the door locked, while the voice of the tutor within insultingly informed them that they need not trouble themselves further—that he and Olivia should make themselves quite comfortable, and should not listen to any more of their representations, being capable of managing their own affairs.

Horace was in despair. "It was my fault," said he, "all my fault. If I had not believed the fellow's word! I was a fool. I fancied I heard her fall, when all the time she was

probably standing by and laughing at my not being able to see her."

They were joined by the young doctor, sent for by my father, who, when he heard the case, appeared excessively amused.

"The only way I see," said he, "of getting in, is through the window. I suppose they have a ladder."

They ran into the garden, the crowd jeering them, attracted and amused by the publicity of the affair. A ladder was planted against the wall, and my father was about to mount, when Horace stopped him, dragged him aside, and had some parley with him, after which he ran up the ladder, broke a pane of glass, and threw the window open.

Olivia again began to shriek.

"Open the door, Mr. Bevis," said my father. "For her friends' sake, I am come to propose terms to you. The arrangement I offer will be very advantageous. You may accept it or not, as you like. If you reject it, I shall wash my hands of Miss Olivia."

"What are your terms?" said Bevis.

"Open the door," said my father, springing into the room; "open the door, for I want witnesses. Horace, the landlady, and the surgeon of the place, are outside."

"Don't open it, it is a trick. Don't open it, my dearest," cried Olivia, and flung herself against the door.

"Mr. Bevis," said my father, "convince her *we* are men of honor: *we* do not have recourse to *tricks*."

"Don't be a fool, Olivia," said Bevis, drawing her from the door, and opening it.

When his witnesses came in, "To both of you," said my father, "in the name and for the sake of Miss Talbot's family, we propose, *first*, that you shall be married to-morrow morning in London, by special license, procured at our expense."

"By special license, at St. George's, Hanover Square. By *special license*, my dear madam," said the young doctor to Olivia. He was the only one of the party the least inclined to take any notice of her. As soon as he came in he asked leave to feel her pulse, begged her not to give way to agitation, and sat down by her side.

"*Secondly*," said my father; "in consideration of this marriage, it is proposed by Horace Vane, who has the means at his disposal, to pay your passages to India, where he will give you, Mr. Bevis, such letters to the house of Vane, Chetney, and Vane, as will secure you a situation and a competency."

"India, my dear madam!" said the surgeon. "The climate of India will be of the greatest service to your health. In India you will be a sort of princess; palanquins, natives, tigers, elephants, and all that sort of thing at your disposal."

Olivia smiled. My father continued.

"And, thirdly, Mr. Bevis, as we have reason to suspect that you owe debts to trades-people, and other persons in Sandrock and its neighborhood, Mr. Vane desires you will engage to remit him ten per cent. quarterly upon your salary, for the benefit of these creditors, to whom he is willing to become security."

"I do not see that Horace has power to do this," said Bevis, "He is a minor, and infirm."

"You must be quite aware that my father will do anything I ask," said Horace, firmly. "The Hill Farm I inherit from my mother. I have a much larger allowance than I have ever spent, and have funds in hand quite equal to the payment of your passage."

"*Lastly*, Mr. Bevis," said my father, "if you accept our terms, we expect you to leave Miss Talbot in our hands until her marriage. If we fail to perform our part of these engagements, we shall then permit her to take her own course, doing our best, however, by warning and advice, to prevent her elopement with you."

Bevis, after some consultation with Olivia, having signified his consent to the proposed arrangement, that young lady was delivered over to the landlady, who had strict injunctions from my father not to lose sight of her, and Bevis went down into the bar, notwithstanding her frantic efforts to detain him.

They offered a fee to the young doctor. "You think I have earned it in the exercise of my profession," said he, laughing; "you think I deserve it for humbugging?"

"If that be a legitimate branch of the medical profession, I think you quite a master of your art."

"One has plenty of practice, even here; practice in humbug I mean," said the young surgeon.

In the middle of the night, my father was awakened by a noise, and sprang up, with a full conviction that Bevis was again carrying off Olivia. The flickering gleams thrown through the holes of a tin shade, by an attenuated rushlight, were too feeble to enable him to recognise the figure by his bed.

"It is I," said Horace; "I can't sleep."

"What's o'clock?" said my father.

"It is only a quarter after three, by my repeater."

Now, amongst the *petites misères de la vie humaine*, there is no brief suffering more acute than to be called upon, when overcome by sleep, to give your interest and attention to a wakeful person. My father pinched himself to keep awake, but settling down upon his pillows, found the task impossible. So he fought his battle with old Somnus, sitting up in bed.

"Would you very much mind," said Horace, "letting Bevis ride on with me to town, and going yourself with Miss Olivia?"

"No. In this affair, I am nothing but your agent. You have the money; I wish to heaven I had!"

"My dear fellow," said Horace, earnestly, "you need not envy me the cash. I am thankful to it for what it *can* do, but it cannot buy me the sight of one eye. As to Olivia, I should be glad that task should fall on you. I have been dreading it all night. She might take advantage of me. I dare say you will find her quite agreeable. You are a ladies' man."

"Ladies, indeed!" cried my father. "Do not insult the sex by considering *her* a lady. There is the very devil in that girl."

"There is little enough of the fallen angel about her," replied Horace. "Everything I ever saw in her was low and mean. There are none of those perverted grand qualities which Milton took to form his Satan."

"True; but Milton's Satan is a Titan, not a devil."

Which literary observation gave a pang to my father, as he uttered it, recalling the note of his publisher, and the failure of his production.

"What did she mean to-night," said Horace, sitting on the bed, "about her running off with a Frenchman?"

"Who mean, about what?" said my father.

"About Amabel and a French officer?"

"Oh!" said my father, rousing himself from the embrace of his beloved divinity, "It is a great secret, but, I suppose, Horace, I may tell *you*."

As he went on, he warmed into the history; and the earliest rays of dawn having, before he had done, fallen aslant into the chamber, he sprang up, dismissed Horace to dress, and sent to call Bevis and Miss Olivia.

He had the satisfaction of being as severely snubbed as circumstances would permit, by Olivia, who would take no notice of him when she came into the room; nor would she drink tea, because he presided over the tea-pot, but shared the poached eggs and buttered toast of her bridegroom, who seemed by no means willing to reciprocate her demonstrations of affection.

Nothing could have been less interesting to my father, than his journey up to town with her. Not a word, for many miles, was exchanged between them. As they were entering London, he roused himself, in spite of his dislike, to point out objects of interest; but Olivia turned him the cold shoulder, till, as the carriage passed along the Edgeware road, her attention was caught by a milliner's window.

"Mr. Ord," said she, turning round with sudden animation, "I want a bonnet to be married in. I am not fit to go to church in this fright of a thing."

"Certainly, Miss Talbot."

He stopped the carriage. She went in and selected the one that pleased her taste, sat down, and waited half an hour in the shop, while they trimmed it with orange flowers, and finally, she requested my father to lend her the money to pay for it.

He gave her the few pounds he had in his purse, and, suddenly remembering that if she went to India she must be provided with an outfit, he took great pleasure in the thought that he could thus indirectly offer his little purse to Amabel. It had distressed him to think that Horace alone was to assist her with money. He cursed, in his heart, the "Lazy Longings" which had cost him a hundred pounds, which might have been

of use to her; and as soon as he had seen Olivia safely deposited in a parlor at an inn contiguous to St. George's, he went to his banking house, which happened not to be in the city, and drew out his little balance, which he put into her hand.

"Oh! thank you, Mr. Ord," said she; "I have been talking to the chambermaid, and she tells me there are lovely summer muslins to be had cheap at this time of year."

"Miss Talbot," said my father, solemnly, "let me advise you to remember that your wedding wardrobe will probably be *mourning*."

"You are very unkind to me, all of you," said Olivia, bursting into tears. "You want to make me unhappy at my wedding; but here they come!" she added, running to the window, and seeing Bevis and Horace get out of a coach. "In another half hour I shall be Mrs. Bevis. I wonder whether that old monster has got the wedding ring!"

CHAPTER XII.

All my life long
I have beheld with most respect the man
Who knew himself, and knew the ways before him.
And from amongst them chose considerably
With a clear foresight—not a blindfold courage,—
And, having chosen, with a steadfast mind
Pursued his purposes.

TAYLOR.—*Philip Van Artevelde.*

On the register of St. George's, amongst names of note and fashion, ladies to whom the Duke has acted father, bridegrooms with long pedigrees, and fashionable brides, stands the obscure record of this marriage.

The clergyman who performed the ceremony wondered at the unfashionable character of parties who were married by special license, and at the smallness of his fee. Immediately after the marriage Bevis and Horace went again into the city. My father would have accompanied them, but Olivia, in high

spirits, seized him by the arm, and insisted on his going shopping.

"I will introduce you, Mrs. Bevis," said he, "to a friend of mine, a fashionable milliner and dressmaker in Bond street."

"La! Mr. Ord, how ever did you get acquainted with such a person?" said Olivia.

"We were both *detenus* at Verdun," said my father. "I was taken prisoner, near Rome, in 1812, having been sent on boat service up the Tiber. They marched me all through Italy, into the heart of France. I was recommended, when I reached Verdun, to board with this Miss Graham, who was exceedingly kind to midshipmen. She and her sister had been daughters of a Scotch officer, who, dying, left them unprovided for; and, with that rare courage which can sacrifice, when circumstances demand it, a fiction of gentility, they came up to London to be milliners. They were doing very well, when, at the Peace of Amiens, Miss Flora, my friend, went over to France to get the fashions. The war broke out, and she was sent to Verdun. Having some little means she set up a *pension*, which was of the greatest service to her countrymen; and I owe more to Miss Flora than to almost any person living, for there were plenty of temptations at Verdun for a friendless little middy. I never come up to town without going to see her. She is to me a living monument of the good that a plain single woman, with small means, may quietly accomplish."

So saying, without noticing the toss of Olivia's head at his mention of old maids, my father knocked at Miss Graham's door in Bond street, and was admitted into the show-room.

"I should like to see Miss Flora," he said to the young person who received them; and in a few moments a quiet-looking old lady, dressed in black, came in.

"Is this your lady, Mr. Ord?" she said, observing the bridal flowers in the bonnet of Olivia.

"No, Miss Flora! She is a lady just married, who is going out to India. I am the friend of her family, and have brought her to you."

He whispered something aside, to which Miss Graham answered, "Certainly, Mr. Ord, to any friend of yours."

Olivia was already trying on some very flashy and expensive millinery.

"I would not advise you to buy these things to-day, Mrs. Bevis," said my father. "Miss Graham will be glad to see you another time."

"I had no intention of buying anything, I assure you," said Olivia. But she stayed so long, pulling over every flower, cap, and bonnet in the show-room, that they did not get back to the hotel till after the two gentlemen had returned from the city. There was barely time for my father and Horace to take the Hampshire mail.

* * * * *

It was six in the morning when the chaise in which they had, with some difficulty, made their way across the heath, stopped at the bridge of Sandrock, and my father jumped out.

"Go to bed at once, old boy," he said to Horace. "I will come up soon, and let you know."

As he swung himself over the stile, and gained the path, which was to lead him by a short cut to her cottage, he heard the church bell of the village begin to toll. All the sweet influences of early dawn were abroad that morning. Though overhead the sky seemed clear, a softening mist mellowed the purple distance, and the eye lingered upon objects in the foreground, the mountain ashes with their tufts, the hazels at whose roots peeped forth the autumn violet, the hawthorn covert where the linnet sang.

The turf along the path was dry under his feet; here and there, as he passed, some tall, dry, slender weed crackled, when he brushed it by. Autumn had mellowed with its touch the brown tints of the beeches, and an early frost had given a russet glow to all the foliage of the wood. On one side bubbled a blithe brooklet—to him its murmur seemed to babble of those happy days when her footsteps had hallowed the same path as she paid her daily visits to the Hill Farm, during the sickness of Horace. A breeze began to tremble over the leaves of the copse; it played across the stubble field. On the day when his hopes were brightest, the young wheat had been

springing green and fresh above the furrows. It had ripened, and been reaped, gleaned, and garnered, since then.

Another breeze flew by him;—the solemn knell it bore seemed to strike upon his heart. Mounting a rising ground which led out of the copse, he paused beside a stile and looked around the moor, which had been brown and bare during his spring visit, and now was purple with the heath in flower. An exclamation of astonishment escaped him. It had been morning twilight as he crossed the heath, and the full beauty of the change now broke upon him in the ruddy glow of the sun.

On every side but one, stretched out the moorland landscape. On that one side the copse was parted from the heath by a fringe of flowering broom. Every waft of wind that reached him from the heath, seemed to bear and scatter perfume. Though no man was to be seen at that early hour of the morning, life was not wanting to animate the landscape. The “heavy winged thieves,” who love the sweet farina of the moorland, flew past him with their spoils. Cattle were standing in the fields through which he had to pass; brown sheep were grazing on the purple hills. All was so still, it hushed his heart—so still!—save where the bell of death gave forth its warning knell.

He walked on, almost in a dream. He entered the premises by the gate under the arch of ivy. The once familiar door bell had now a jarring sound.

“How is the Captain?” he said to the old woman who opened the door to him.

“The Captain is dead, sir,” she replied. Her face had told him so before she spoke. “He died at five o’clock this morning.”

“Marriage and death,—mourning and feasting—Sarah,” said my father, musingly. “Miss Olivia is married. Can I see your mistress?”

“Walk in, sir. She is still in *his* room; I will call her, if you please to wait, sir.”

She showed him into the dining parlor. Not having chosen to go to bed since the event, she had set out the breakfast table with snowy napery, white cups, and plates, the honey of the heath, and home-made bread upon a wooden trencher.

He stood at the window, watching the light mist that was rising from the river—hearing the solemn bell which announced to the neighborhood the departure of a soul. Amabel came in, dressed in white, in a loose dimity wrapper. Over her shoulders hung the soft folds of her cashmere. She looked very pale. The shock of the night had opened the sluices of her tears. She wept not only for her recent loss, but for her earlier sorrows. Since her health had been less strong, her face, when in repose, had expressed that condition of the heart so beautifully described by Longfellow :

A feeling of sadness and longing
That is not akin to pain,
But resembles sorrow only
As the mist resembles rain.

She greeted him with a sad, quiet gentleness, unlike her usual cordiality of manner.

“Sarah says Olivia is married,” she began.

“Yes, thank God ; she is safe,” he said.

“But what a safety !” she exclaimed. “To be the wife of Bevis !”

My father endeavored to comfort her. While he continued speaking, she sat down at the table and poured out tea. As he watched her, he felt how unspeakably blessed would be that home of which she was the presiding spirit ; and his cousin who had owned this pearl of price, thought its possession a disgrace, and cast it from him. To abandon such a woman, to leave her exposed to the chance influences of life, to evil men and evil days, struck him as cruel and unmanly. To do penance for such thoughts—to raise an additional barrier between her and himself—he told her before he left, he had had a recent letter from her husband—there was nothing in it about her—but would she like to read it ?

“Oh ! so much !” The trembling eagerness with which she took it, the wistful way in which she gazed at the direction till tears gathered in her eyes, went to his heart. He took up his hat and left her with the letter.

It was a long letter, written in one of those moments of yearning after home, which soften the heart of the wanderer.

It began by entreating Theodosius to go and see his children, and to write him word how they looked, how much they had grown, if they were happy. "I have been driven forth," he said, "from my home, and its affections, and have learned by misfortune that without the enjoyment of such blessings there is no real happiness, and that with them there is no excuse for sorrow or discontent."

Speaking of certain political changes that were agitating England at that period, he went on to say: "I am isolated from all mankind—for I rarely go ashore unless I land upon the savage coast of Barbary, off which I am engaged in cruising, and occasionally giving chase to a corsair. I am without a human being near me from whom I can imbibe an idea or a prejudice, for my society consists solely of young officers, with whom I have only a professional intercourse; so that I am mostly alone. I can, therefore, view impartially the questions which quicken the pulses and flush the cheeks of our orators and statesmen, and look back with surprise upon the days in which I chafed with all the ardor and bitter emotions of a partisan. As regards the future, all my buoyancy and sanguine temperament have disappeared. My health is good, and I take much exercise. Physical fatigue deadens reflection. The excitement of my duty keeps me all day upon deck; at night I retire early to my cabin. There is something congenial to my spirit in being day after day upon the wild waters, which for all I know, or perhaps care, may be my resting-place."

The feelings of her heart as she read this, have since that day been forcibly expressed in that most heart-rending poem, *The Valediction*, in which Miss Barrett has given voice to the inarticulate grief of hundreds of her sex; who, adopting and repeating it, have found it a cry of relief to their own souls:

Can I bless thee, my beloved—can I bless thee?
 What blessing word can I
 From my own tears keep dry?
 What flower grows in my field wherewith to dress thee?
 My good reverts to ill;—
 My calmnesses would move thee—
 My softnesses would prick thee
 My bindings up would break thee,
 My crownings curse and kill.

Alas ! I can but love thee !
May God bless thee, my beloved—may God bless thee !

It seemed most strange that while her life was full of recollections of her husband, she should have no longer part or lot in any of his daily interests. That while his memory lay so deeply in her heart, that she prayed for him morning and night, and while her own life seemed in every way connected with his remembrance, she should have been living with so little real knowledge of his actual employments and his state of feeling. The information that she gained seemed to remove him further off from her than ever.

She was eager to reconcile the Leonard who was always in her thoughts with the Leonard of reality. When Theodosius came in, later in the day, she questioned him (timidly at first), about her husband. And he, finding how deeply she was interested by any trivial anecdote of Captain Warner, submitted, at the price of his self love, to give her pleasure.

They spent that afternoon walking up and down the grass plot—the next day he came early, and the next. If they found themselves alone they talked of Leonard. The week the Talbot family passed in strict seclusion, while death was in the house, was not unhappy. Already Theodosius and Horace began planning for the future, the former telling her that she must ride that autumn, and proposing to brush up all his learning, and to help to teach the boys. He was resolved to spend the winter at the Hill Farm, and Horace was delighted with the plan.

Since they had talked so much of Leonard, she seemed to my father less the love of his past dreams than the wife of his cousin. Their intercourse was nearly on its old footing.

After the funeral, my father walked up with her to her house. He spoke again of how much good it would do her to ride on horseback on the moors.

“Now that Olivia is married,” said he, “and your cares have become less, we shall see you no longer

“Compelled to suffer through the day
Restraints which no rewards repay,
And cares where love has no concern.”

"Oh! you mistake, indeed you do," said she. "Love has had great concern in all my cares. Those that were once distasteful have become dear to me as discipline; and I shall sadly miss my dear step-father. I was most sincerely attached to him."

"How much more disinterested women are, than we!" exclaimed my father; "a man could not say that of the man who had ruined him."

"Far be it from me," said Amabel, "to speak lightly of the errors into which a man may be led by a taste for speculation, a word which, somebody has remarked, too often begins with the second letter. Do you think," she added, after a pause, "one never can retrieve a fault? Do you not think that, though one can never be the same one would have been, had it never been committed, one may be *better*? Is not error an element of progress? Do you think it signifies essentially what 'the world' says of us, if we have the consciousness within our hearts of improvement and integrity? Ought one not to take even the unjust things the world says as the natural and just punishment of former error?"

She spoke with a tearful eagerness which made my father feel she was applying all she uttered to herself.

"You are right," he said, "you always are. The world's opinion is measured upon a shadow, thrown off from what we are. And if we die with a vertical sun over our heads, before the world has time to take our altitude by our shadow, what does it signify, so we are what we ought to be, and the right work has been done?"

The light of her eyes, the grave smile on her lip, told him she felt deeply and applied his simile. For a few minutes she was silent.

"And now," she said, "there is something I wish to ask. Olivia writes to Annie that you have some acquaintance with a respectable and worthy dressmaker; do you think she would take Annie for a small premium? The poor child earnestly desires it. She has no aptitude for study, no taste for teaching. She must make her own way in the world. There are so many governesses!"

"But an officer's daughter!" cried my father, forgetting what he had said on the subject to Olivia not ten days before.

"That consideration is the shadow of a shade," said Amabel, with a smile. "Poor little Annie has taken a wiser view. Miss Darius, our dressmaker at F——; will take her into partnership, if she can obtain proper instruction."

"And what are your own plans?" said my father.

* "I shall go out as governess, if I can find a situation. The position may be odious, but the employment would not be distasteful to me. I should like a situation in which I could take a summer holiday, and gather my brothers and Annie under my wing. Ned I must place somewhere, till he is old enough to go to sea, and Joseph must be put to a cheap school. I have luckily a little money left, and I think I could manage this, if my services would command a tolerable salary."

"If we could get Ned into the naval school, it would be a great thing. He is just the fellow for sea."

"Yes," said Amabel, with pride in her pet brother. "It will be hard for me to part with them,—with him, hardest of all."

Horace and my father would have admired and respected her more than ever, could they have overheard that night, her affectionate discourse with the young orphans. To Ned she talked cheerily of his fancy for the sea, encouraging his boyish hope that one day, if he were brave and good, he would rise to be an Admiral; whilst to Joe, she promised a supply of "taws," and "alleys," engaging to put a long tail to his kite, and encouraging him to look with pleasant hopes to his prospect of going to school. Annie, when the boys were gone to rest, threw her arms about her neck, and laid her head upon her breast, and wept, and kissed her. Amabel, whilst she uttered words of encouragement and consolation, breathed a prayer, that Annie's efforts to earn her own poor crust might not be long required; that she herself might be soon at liberty to offer her shelter and a home under the roof of her husband.

"Had I never failed in duty," was her thought, "I should at this crisis have been mistress of the Cedars. I should have had a home to offer these young creatures, who, now, as a consequence of my fault are thrust out into the world."

THEODOSIUS TO AMABEL.

"Warwick Street, Oct. 14, 1819.

"MY DEAR MRS. LEONARD :

"I have seen Miss Graham, and have easily persuaded her to take Miss Annie. Miss G. desires me to say, that she will do all in her power to favor the poor child, and to soften the rigors of her situation ; but that there must necessarily be much, both in the working of the present system, and her association with unrefined young persons of inferior position, that will be very distasteful to her. Still, Miss Flora, who has gone herself through the ordeal, thinks she is doing the right thing, and will, as much as possible, cherish and protect her. There is no other establishment in town where she would not have to work after nine, for women, as a class, are very cruel to women ; but Miss Graham, unless pressed in the height of the season, never keeps her young ladies beyond that hour. She thinks Annie will find it an advantage to begin her apprenticeship at once, as she will become accustomed to the work and the confinement before the season. It seems a hard life for her, dear Amabel, and if her heart misgives her, the stipulation I have made at your request leaves her free at any time.

"In Bond street, as I was passing your late father's club, I met Admiral Lord Epervier. I have only a slight acquaintance with his lordship, but knowing him to be the President of the Naval School, I ventured to accost him. His lordship was extremely gracious, gave me a paper of the rules and regulations, and took me into the Club, where he introduced me to several gentlemen. I found amongst these Sir Jeremiah Thompson, just come up from the eastern counties, who promised to interest himself for 'Talbot's son.' You will see by the paper I inclose, that the pupils are of three classes. Those who pay £100 a year for their schooling ; those (of whom John Warner is one), who pay £35, the bare cost of their board and instruction, and the pupils on the foundation, who pay nothing at all. I have thought you would prefer Ned should enter as the second kind of pupil, especially as I find I can procure money to pay his way from the naval fund.

"I am on my way to Brighton to see Miss Tucker. —

old soul, the aunt of Horace, and my own near connexion. It was from her house Captain Warner married his first wife, who was her relation. I find, on examining a list of persons having the right of presentation to Christ's Hospital, that she is one, and that her turn is near at hand. I make little doubt I can so manage as to get her presentation for Joseph. As you are so great a stranger in London I send you Lamb's book on Christ's Hospital, to prepare your mind for seeing him in the horrible disguise of a Blue Coat Boy.

"In haste, ever sincerely yours, "THEO. ORD."

THEODOSIUS TO AMABEL.

"Brighton, October 18, 1819.

"DEAR MRS. LEONARD :

"I took my maiden relative completely by surprise, and flurried her not a little. She gave me at once to understand she had promised her presentation to Christ's Hospital, and has refused hundreds of applications. Knowing my good aunt's way of doing business, I ventured to inquire when, where, and to whom she had given her promise, and found that, ten years ago, when she had her last chance, she had been obliged to disappoint a very worthy country parson, and had promised to give a younger child of his her next turn. I inquired if she knew anything about this child, and finding she did not, suggested she should write and ascertain about him. She wrote that very day, and before she got her answer had worked herself up to a great pitch of anxiety and enthusiasm. I talked to her a great deal about you, and her fits of irritation at herself for her unlucky promise, and of hope the child was dead, were exceedingly diverting. This morning she received her answer, when, to my very great amusement and her own content, we discover that the promise she had made was *ante-natal*. The infant happened to be born a *girl*, and the father thought no more of it. This anecdote is Miss Taylor all over. You have Miss Taylor before you, blindly, blunderingly enthusiastic, fussily benevolent, *inconsequente*, but with a freshness of interest in the concerns of her fellow-creatures, very unusual

with a person of her age. She is the kindest-hearted woman in the world, and the most *persuadable*.

"I have told her it is her duty to invite Horace to make her house his residence till his father makes some arrangement to replace Bevis, but she has a nervous fear of any one afflicted with personal infirmity. She will worry him out of his life by her attentions, will persist in considering him helpless, and in spite of all possible remonstrances, if he is delivered over to her care, I have no doubt she will feed him with a spoon.

"She has made me this morning a proposition which, under these circumstances, I think very good. She wishes to know whether you could be induced to accompany Horace, and be governess to a little girl she is going to take home from school. I earnestly advise you to accept this offer. Miss T. begs you will dictate your terms, and will listen to any stipulation. You may govern her and all her household, for she is of a timid and uncertain nature, made to be ruled by a strong mind. She is wildly enthusiastic about you at this moment. She is disposed to do anything to serve you. There is no person on earth with whom she so much desires to be acquainted. You will at once establish an influence which will be of equal service to her and to Horace, to yours and to you. I should like to have an answer as soon as possible. Miss T., indeed, suggested sending this by express, though there is in reality no hurry. Meantime take care of yourself, my dear friend, consult Horace, and believe me ever,

"Your attached friend and cousin,

"THEO. ORD."

CHAPTER XIII.

God assigns

All thy tears over like pure crystallines

For younger fellow workers of the soil

To wear as amulets.

MRS. BROWNING.

Miss Taylor had a house on the Old Steyne. Thither our principal *dramatis personæ* are now converging. Captain

Warner, to be sure, is not making a straight course for Brighton, having just passed through the Straits of Gibraltar, with despatches for Sir Hudson Lowe at St. Helena; but the frigate that he commands is thence to return to England; his thoughts dwell often on his native land; and, in consequence of letters he has just received, chiefly fix themselves on the Old Steyne.

Theodosius, Amabel, and Horace, are approaching it by mail. As for Annie, Ned, and Joseph, the tide of the great city has swept them from our view.

With an aching heart, Amabel committed her young sister to Miss Flora, feeling that "the system," like that of slavery or despotism, can only be made endurable by the intervention of "happy accident," in the character of those by whom it is administered. Annie Talbot, without any literary capacity, had exhibited, since her father's death, an energy of purpose which had greatly endeared her to Amabel.

Joseph was already on his way to the Blue Coat nursery, at Hertford. Ned had been left at the naval school. He took leave of his sister in the carriage. He struggled hard to maintain that firmness at parting which custom considers the best preparation for manliness, but natural feelings got the better of stoic pride—he threw himself on her breast, and began to cry. He was comforted somewhat by receiving a purse, which she had knit for him, containing three new half-crowns.

Still drawing his breath hard, he followed Theodosius Ord into the parlor of the establishment. Theodosius asked for Warner, and after committing Talbot to the care of that young fellow, and tipping him with liberality, that he might remember to protect Ned's entrance into the school, he returned to Amabel, accompanied to the gate by the two boys. The children made a contrast which smote her to the heart. Ned, with his dark and glossy curls, his animated eyes, free movements, and fresh cheeks, had the air of a boy nurtured with care; John Warner was a pale neglected schoolboy. He had a look as if he were not accustomed to receive visitors—as if he knew nothing of the ties of home.

Wrapped in sad thoughts, she sat in one corner of the coach, travelling towards Brighton, when she was roused to attention

by the conversation of Theodosius with the fourth inside passenger. Captain Warner's conversation had been distinguished for its picturesque and admirable style of anecdote, Ferdinand Guiscard's by its adaptiveness, but she had never met before a first-rate practised converser: one of those men who are so brilliantly agreeable when thrown a little out of their own sphere, because they have at command not only the current chit-chat of the day, but staler stories of the year before, which cannot be made available in their own circle, the laws of which forbid a twice-told tale.

This No. 4, inside the mail, was a man of this description. When Amabel first gave heed to his discourse, he was talking with my father about the wonders of the divining rod, the Jannes and the Jambres of old and modern Egypt, and all the other faintly dawning marvels of mesmerism. Amabel listened in amazement. She seemed to find herself transported into the wonderful dream life of her childhood.

From Mesmer and his "ism," the discourse branched off to the subject of ancient civilization, *à-propos* of which, my father said that it was singular so many names out of the Classical Dictionary were retained in Sandrock and its neighborhood; that the commonest name amongst its peasantry was Cæsar, and that Darius, Alexander, and Cyrus flourished largely on the shop signs of the neighboring town.

"Your name, ma'am," said the passenger, turning to Amabel, whom Horace addressed always by her Christian name, "your name is a singular one."

Without waiting for a reply, for he was in the full tide of brilliant and successful conversation, encouraged, as I have said, by the wonder and delight of an appreciative auditory, he went on: "I never heard the name you bear but once, and then it was trolled day and night by a French colonel of huzzars to the burden of a drinking song. I was coming up in the year '14 from Marseilles to Paris, in the *coupé* of the *diligence*, when he joined me. He was particularly curious on the subject of our laws of divorce. If his story were true, he had suffered injuries sufficiently exasperating from a captain in our navy, and was coming over to England with an intention of

taking his revenge by seducing his enemy's wife, and afterwards marrying her, the case involving some question of property which he wished to secure."

Here my father, with more zeal than sound discretion, stamped violently on the toes of the speaker, who, being one of those rare persons who can receive such a hint without breaking short off in their sentence with confusion, or saying in an angry whisper, "What the deuce are you kicking me for?"—quietly remarked that no man could measure the lying impudence of Frenchmen when they get upon the subject of *bonnes fortunes*, and turned the conversation to the wines of the south of France, and the probability of a change of ministry.

He got out of the coach a short distance from Brighton. Theodosius, when he had left, grew very fidgety. On entering the town, he too got out with a hurried apology to Amabel, desiring Horace to tell their aunt that he had pressing business to attend to, but would be with her in the evening.

In a few moments more the coach stopped on the Old Steyne. The door of their new home was thrown open by a servant in blue and scarlet livery, and Amabel and Horace found themselves in the hall surrounded by their carpet-bags and boxes.

"This way, madam," said the servant, ushering them into a small library. An elderly lady met them at the door. There was a strange mixture of courtliness and kindness in her reception. She made Amabel a funny little tripping courtesy, and then kissed her. She was a woman about sixty; with still a pretty face, though her figure had long ceased to retain any proportion. On the top of her grey hair, which frizzled over her brow in all directions, she had mounted a wonderful starched cap; her gown was short, and showed pretty little feet, too small to support her frame, and she rolled in her walk like Jack in a gale of wind.

"Come in, my dear—don't stand in the draught. Bennett will see to your things. Bennett will pay all there is to pay. Bennett, you hear me?"

And seizing upon Horace, she led him carefully into the room, and pushed him into a chair.

"Why don't you have a dog, Horace, to lead you by a string?"

"Thank you, Aunt Taylor, I have no taste for canine services when I can do better," said Horace, laying his hand on that of Amabel. "And you need not talk so loud," he added, "I can *hear*."

"I think you can get safely about this room," said Miss Taylor, looking round the apartment, which was certainly very bare. "I had all the tables carried off before you came. This winter we will sit here instead of in the drawing-room, because of my Dresden china."

"I do not think you need be afraid," said Amabel. "I never yet saw Horace run over a table or chair."

"Won't you take off your bonnet, my dear? Perhaps you had better go up at once to your own room. I hope you will like it. I was so glad you consented to come to us."

At that moment a pensive fair-haired girl came into the library. "Katie, come here and hold yourself straight," said Miss Taylor; "I want to introduce you to this lady. I hope you will not be troublesome. Mrs. Leonard—Miss Catherine Warner."

Miss Taylor did not see the start of her governess, nor the sudden flush that mounted to her face; she was taking Horace's hat out of his hand and otherwise fussing over him. Katie Warner, who had timidly approached her instructress with the intention of taking her hand, chilled by receiving no reception, was turning away, when Amabel, with sudden impulse, threw her arms about her, drew her to her heart, and kissed the fair young head and the pale forehead.

Katie looked up into her face, and, inspired with confidence by what she saw, returned the embrace fervently.

"Take Mrs. Leonard up to her own room," said Miss Taylor to Katie Warner. "I did not wait dinner because I thought, my dear, you would like a beefsteak with your tea. You must be hungry," she said, ringing the bell to hurry Bennett; "Katie, take Mrs. Leonard up to her own room, and see the fire burns, and ring the bell for Anne, and tell her to attend to all she wants, and make yourself of use, but don't annoy her. I will stay with him," she said, in an aside to Amabel, "in case he should want anything."

"I—I think I will not take off my bonnet," said Amabel, "at least not till I have spoken to Mr. Ord."

"Just as you please about going to your room, but take your things off here. You cannot want to drink tea in your bonnet. It would make me quite uncomfortable. I want to see you enjoy your tea, my dear. Put your bonnet on the table. Oh! I forgot; there is no table. Bennett, take her things, and put them in the hall. I think you had much better see if you like your room. It has a southern aspect. I want you to see if it suits you. Katie, show Mrs. Leonard her room, you know."

Thus adjured, Amabel went up the stairs, passing her arm round the waist of her step-daughter. For this one hour, till Theodosius Ord's return, she might enjoy the happiness of being near her. Then she must launch forth again on the dark, stormy, troubled waves of life, leaving this friendly shelter. She could not stay, of course, as governess to Katie Warner.

She could not bear to see the room with preparations for her comfort; the cheerful fire burning, the bed turned down.

"Let me go into Mr. Vane's room," she whispered to Katie. "I have his keys, and we will unpack his portmanteau."

Katie noticed that, as her governess knelt before the trunk, her tears fell fast upon the linen. Katie had a kind heart, and had herself known trouble.

"That woman could not be of nature's making,
Who, being kind, her misery made not kinder."

She stole up to Amabel and gave her a kiss.

"My child—my precious child," said Amabel, fairly overcome; and closing the portmanteau, she seated herself before it, and drew Katie to her side.

"Tell me something of yourself," said she.

"I do not know that there is much to tell," said the young girl, "except that I have never had a home like other girls, and nobody has ever seemed to be much interested about me. Sometimes I think of the old song:

"I care for nobody, no, not I,
For nobody cares for *u* e,"

and I think that is my case too. Won't you be kind to me, and try if you can love me?"

Receiving Amabel's caress, given without reply, Katie Warner went on. "I have not seen my papa for three long years, and scarcely saw him for several years before. He came back from sea, and married a second time. My own mamma died when I was very young—and poor papa's new wife turned out so ill, and made him so unhappy. I do not believe he will ever return to live in England, and we have no fixed home. I have only seen, twice in these three years, my brother. Don't you think," said she, after a pause, "it was very unjust and cruel of the girls at school to taunt and twit me about that bad wife of my father? I only saw her two or three times. I did not even live in her house. She was not my own mamma, you know. But whenever they got angry, or when I was naughty, every one would say that I took after her. I am sure I would not be like her, Mrs. Leonard, for the world, and grieve papa. I suppose we shall be richer now that grandmamma is dead, and papa has got his property," said Katie, continuing her confidence; "but papa has never been rich before. He wrote word to my mistress that I must never be extravagant, as he had little more than his half pay. All the girls were rich, and my gowns used to get so bad. I had no one to look after me. I try to make them last as long as they can. I try not to wish for new ones. What is the matter, Mrs. Leonard, are you ill?"

"Nothing, my child." She remembered that the money of which this forlorn child had felt the want, had, by her husband's generosity, been given up to her. Her punishment was greater than she could bear.

"Let me get you some *sal volatile*," said Kate. "Aunt Taylor takes lots of *sal volatile*."

"No, nothing of that kind. Sit down and tell me more."

"There is nothing to tell—only my school life was unhappy. The girls did not like me much, they said I was so sensitive and childish; and the teachers did not like my wearing such old clothes. When grandmamma died, papa wrote to Aunt Taylor, and she came the other day, and brought me here.

I shall love you very much. I mean to do my very best. I do really."

"And suppose that I must leave you?"

"Then I shall have to go back again to school. She said so the other day. Dear Mrs. Leonard, I am sure you won't do that! You will try how I behave a little while. She said if I did not please you I should have to go to school again."

Amabel had a little turquoise ring upon her finger. It had been a first love gift from Felix. She drew it off, and put it upon Katie's hand. "Wear that always for my sake," she said, "and never think, dear child, that no one loves you."

"If you please, ladies, tea," said the footman.

"Katie, my love, unpack this trunk to-morrow for poor Horace, and be kind to him. He will love you, and your cousin, Mr. Ord, will love you. Every one will love you, if you show them love."

So saying they went down into the library, where Amabel gently but decidedly took Horace out of good Miss Taylor's hands. She ate little herself, but busied herself with him; yet all she did was so quietly done, that you might have drunk tea many times in their company without noticing that he was blind, and that she was waiting on him.

After the meal was cleared away, Miss Taylor and Amabel sat down to backgammon.

"It is a real treat to me, my dear, to find that you can play," said the old lady, as the clock struck ten, closing the backgammon board. "To-morrow night I will give you your revenge. I wonder where Do. Ord is?—I want to thank him, my dear, for bringing you. Ring the bell for the servants, Katie. My dear, it would save my old eyes very much, if you would do me the favor always to read prayers."

So Amabel read in the chapter of Isaiah, wherein is that verse, "Doubtless thou art our Father, though Abraham be ignorant of us, though Israel acknowledge us not—Thou, O Lord, art our Father, our guide, our redeemer, from everlasting."

"I will sit up, Miss Taylor, if you do not object, till Mr. Ord comes home."

"Better go to bed, my dear. Can you turn out the lamp? Will you rake out the fire?"

"Oh! certainly," said Amabel.

The moment all the party were gone, and she had given Katie her last kiss, her last promise of great caution to Miss Taylor, her last pressure of the hand to Horace Vane, with the feeling on her mind, that when they woke up on the morrow she would be no longer in the house, and that her brief appearance there would seem a dream,—she put on her bonnet, cloak, and gloves, and sat down to await my father's arrival. About eleven o'clock she heard his knock. He had taken his candle from Bennett, and was going up to bed, when she came out of the library, and met him.

"I must speak to you," she said, much agitated. "Come in here a minute, Mr. Ord." Tell me why you brought me here? Why did you make me feel how happy I could have been in this new home—when you knew I could not stay with Katie Warner?"

"Do you object to the poor child?"

"Object!—Oh, no! It would have been my greatest happiness to have the care of her. But Miss Taylor and her father never would consent. I ought not to deceive them. In taking any other situation I should have felt myself justified in saying nothing of my past life. Here it is different. I cannot stay. Will you get a coach at once, and take me to some lodging?"

"I knew it!" cried my father. "A man never can do anything to suit a woman! Here have I been walking the streets these last five hours, hoping to prevent this very thing. I knew you would set up absurd scruples."

"You knew that my pupil—the pupil you always professed to know nothing about—was Katie Warner!"

"I thought," said he, going on without answering her exclamation, "that after being with them a few hours, as you have been, your scruples would all vanish. Believe me they are morbid. What harm can you do my cousin Kate?—what good may you not do?"

"Thou shalt not do evil that good may come," she answered,

gravely. "It would be dishonorable to stay here, and deceive Miss Taylor. You know, as well as I, she would not let me stay if she knew I was the discarded wife of Katie's father."

She said this interrogatively.

"I don't know any such absurdity," replied my father. "Let us pause, and think it over. Even good is not to be done hastily. 'Staidness is of God—haste of the devil. Saith the Prophet, it is better not to go to Friday prayers, than to go there in a hurry.'"

"You will not turn the current of my thoughts," she said, "by any gay quotations. If I sleep under this roof to-night, it will be with the fullest intention of quitting it in the morning."

Miss Taylor challenged Amabel, as she passed her door, with "Did you rake out the fire? Did you turn the lamp out?"

"I left Mr. Ord below," said Amabel, and made her way hastily to her own chamber.

Miss Taylor, having the highest opinion of my father's carelessness, and indeed of the untrustworthiness of all his sex with whom she was connected, could not have slept a wink without examining into the safety of her ashes.

Putting a cloak over her dressing gown, and arrayed in a wonderful frilled night coif, with a long band of cambric muslin and lace tied round the crown, which gave it the effect of a tiara, she came down stairs to the library. Her nephew stood before the grate chewing a pen. It was a common practice with him when thoughtful or when worried.

"Come, Do.—go to bed. Where have you been? I want to put out the fire."

"Sit down, Aunt Kate," said he, "sit down—there's a good soul! I want to have some talk with you."

"My dear," said the old lady, always ready for a chat, "I am delighted—perfectly delighted with Mrs. Leonard, I assure you. I can't thank you enough for having induced her to take this situation. She has the prettiest face, and the prettiest ways——"

"Then, I am sorry to inform you, Aunt Taylor," said he, "that I am charged by her to say that you need not think she

is going to remain. I had a hard matter to keep her here to-night, and she will certainly be off to town to-morrow morning."

"Heaven bless us!" cried Miss Taylor. "Why, what can we have done? Bennett and Anne, I hope, have not been rude. Hav'n't they made her comfortable? I put her into the best bedroom. I told you to offer her what salary you would. Doesn't she like Katie Warner?"

"Yes," said my father. "Yes—but there's the rub. You see her true name is not Leonard," said he. "You see she is—in short it is—she is Katie's step-mother, Mrs. Leonard Warner."

"Heaven bless us! Good gracious! That pretty, modest, amiable, young thing!" cried Miss Taylor. "Go along with you, Do. Ord! You are making fun of your old aunt. I am not going to believe you."

"It's true enough. I have known it for some months past," said my father.

"If you knew it, what, for heaven's sake, did you recommend her here for? And, now that I have seen her, and I like her, and have got that little Warner girl from school, and have asked Horace Vane to spend the winter—why do you come and tell me who she is? Why couldn't you keep quiet? What do you want to unsettle me for?"

"The very thing I told her!" exclaimed he. "I thought everything would have gone on right, unless she took a sudden fright on seeing Katie Warner. She not only has been falsely accused, but is holy as the stars, and as pure as the snow. I thought she would be so happy here, and so well protected. That when Warner came back, a few words from you and me would set things between them all tant and ataunto. But she insists, as she says, in not deceiving you; so to-morrow morning she is going off; and I should like to know where she is to go."

"Poor thing—poor pretty young thing! She will go on perhaps from bad to worse. Suppose I send Katie away."

"But she is *not* bad, Aunt Kate, I tell you. It is not a question of bad or of worse. Sit down, and let me explain to you"

Good heavens, Do. ! what shall I do?" cried Miss Taylor, when he had run over the principal points of Amabel's story. "I am so sorry for her, poor dear. I cannot let her go. And what ever am I to do with Horace? And I cannot bear to send Katie back to school. She is so very sensitive. What is to be done? Do. Ord, you got me yourself into this scrape; it is for you to get me out—what is to be done?"

"Aunt Kate," he answered, after a moment's pause, "make me your plenipo. Give me full powers. Let me ask her in your name to remain. If you will, I think I can arrange it for you."

"I wish you would. I had rather it would appear as if nothing had been said to me, you know."

"Make yourself easy, my dear aunt," said my father. "No word upon the subject ever need to pass between you. If she does not agree to stay, she will be gone by daybreak——"

"If she does go by daybreak, be sure that the front door is locked after you leave here," interrupted Miss Taylor. "Offer her any terms if she will stay," she continued, raking out the dead coals from the grate. "She suits me exactly. But—why she is almost one of my own relations! I shall never treat her right, I know."

"You do everything just right," exclaimed my father; "you are the best, and kindest, and most valuable of women. A deal too good for any one man to have had you to himself."

"Ah!" said Miss Taylor, with a sigh; "and you don't suppose Leonard Warner will be angry with me, do you?"

The next morning Amabel was awakened by a maid, who put into her hand the following communication:—

THEODOSIUS TO AMABEL.

"DEAR MRS. LEONARD:

"My aunt and I have had an interview; I have told her *everything*. Do not be angry. She earnestly entreats you to stay, at least till the return of Captain Warner. She offers you your own terms, and is only afraid she shall not make your new home agreeable. It will be an imprudence to throw your—

self upon the world, when such a home is offered to you. Make us all happy by remaining here—none more so than

“Your devoted friend,

“THEO. ORD.

“P.S.—My aunt will send Katie to school if you wish. She is shy about having any conversation with you upon affairs of your own. If you appear at breakfast, she will conclude that you remain. If you decide to go, you had better get away at once. I will take our places by the early coach to town.”

“Is there an answer, ma’am, for Mr. Ord,” said the maid-servant; and Amabel replied, “there is no answer.”

As she fell back on her pillow, the door of communication opened between her room and that of Katie Warner.

“Did you dream any dreams?” said Katie, coming to the side of her bed.

“I dreamed, my darling, that you loved me.”

“Oh!” said she, “your dreams are coming true. I think I shall love you so very much, Mrs. Leonard—next best to dear papa—and the memory of my dead mother.”

CHAPTER XIV.

Oh! how and by what means may I contrive
To bring the hour that calls thee back more near?
How may I teach my drooping hope to live
Until that blessed time when thou art here?

I'll tell thee. For thy sake I will lay hold
Of all good aims, and consecrate to thee
In worthy deeds each moment that is told,
While thou, beloved one, art far from me.

Mrs. F. KEMBLE,

BEHOLD Amabel installed at Brighton, the *de facto* mistress of Miss Taylor's house on the Old Steyne. Bennett brought her his accounts. She was Miss Taylor's right hand, and her right eye. My father, Horace, Katie, and Miss Taylor vied

with each other in attempts to restore her health and make her happy.

At the riding-school to which the young men insisted on taking her and Katie Warner, she was distinguished by her beautiful figure on horseback, and by what my father called her "vaulting ambition," her extreme anxiety to try the leaping bar. She remembered having seen Miss O'Byrne take a wide ditch, and having heard her husband's "bravo!" as she went gallantly over.

As soon as she and Katie had acquired some knowledge of equestrianism, their daily rides extended beyond the saw-dust of the riding-school. They were even distinguished by the notice of George "the Magnificent," who was at that time sojourning in the midst of his faithful people of Brighton, in that hideous Pavilion his taste had set up.

Amabel rode generally with Horace, who required an occasional "To the right, Horace," or "Pull to the left," and whose propensity for the saddle was a crook in the lot of the worthy Miss Taylor.

Early one brilliant autumn morning, when they were out of sight of the houses of the town, my father and his cousin Kate rattled up behind Amabel and Horace, crying out as they flew by:

"Did you see that French print, yesterday, on the Parade, of two people kissing on horseback? What will you bet us that it can't be done?"

"Mr. Ord! Katie! I will hear of no such thing!" cried Amabel, galloping after them.

They checked their horses when they found she was in earnest. Katie looked extremely frightened—all her bright spirits sank at once, and Amabel felt she must be cautious in reproving her.

"Mr. Ord," she said, as my father pulled his horse up at her side, "I thought you had strict notions of womanly propriety; I am astonished at *you*!"

"Yes; *womanly* propriety," said he; "but your pupil is a mere child—a child I have known and romped with all her life—my cousin, too!"

"If she were your own sister, I should disapprove of your kissing her on horseback on the Brighton Downs; but she is not even your first cousin. That 'a man may not marry his second cousin,' is, I believe, no fact in English law."

"Ridiculous!" said my father. "The child is a mere child. You are treating the whole thing as if she were a woman."

"She is not such a child as you appear to think. She is sixteen, I assure you."

"She is a mere passionless little school-girl. Do you recognise no difference between *her* and *you*?"

At that moment they approached nearer to the brink of a dispute than they had ever done before, or than they ever came again. But the little cloud dispersed, at least so far as Amabel and my father were concerned. It seemed, however, to have thrown a damp over the gaiety of Katie. Her self-consciousness, and extreme dread of reproof, which had been lulled to sleep by recent kindness, had been awakened *en sursaut* by this little affair. Her education seemed to have been hitherto directed to repressing, rather than developing, her disposition; and Amabel regretted having checked the familiarity with which she had begun to treat her cousin, since in pulling up a tare she seemed to have been rooting out the wheat also. She had more pure poetical sensibility than Amabel, who chose her favorite poetry for the high thoughts it set forth, and for its tonic effect upon her. Katie had a natural sensibility to all the influences of Nature. She delighted in the verse of Mrs. Hemans. The bent of her nature was to broodingness, and hidden feeling; that of Amabel to sympathy and action. Katie was passive, pensive, and receptive; Amabel diffusive, energetic, and naturally gay. Amabel was a person who could not pass through a room without attracting notice. Katie, who required drawing out, might be overlooked until you knew her. Her admiration for Amabel was unbounded, and her step-mother fully reciprocated her affection. It was beautiful to see them side by side; the dark-haired, bright-eyed, energetic mother looking down with a sort of tender pride upon her fair-haired, soft-eyed, tender, timid child.

Once, when Katie was speaking, as she often did, of the second

marriage and the misfortunes of her father, Amabel ventured to ask her step-mother's maiden name.

"She was French, I *think* her surname was Karnac. Her Christian name," said Katie, undoubtingly, "was Isabelle."

It was probably the strong impression that had been entertained both by Theodosius Ord and Katie Warner, that the second Mrs. Warner had been French, that saved Amabel from suspicion. Nothing about *her* bespoke the foreigner. The purity of her English accent was quite faultless, though there was a little peculiarity about her speech, which lent to what she said a *piquant* charm. Her association with the peasantry of Hampshire had given to her mind an English tone.

Miss Taylor was persuaded by Horace, who loved Sandrock, to pass part of the winter at his farm, and shortly before Christmas the whole family removed there. Dr. Frost told Amabel he was delighted to get back his curate. She went daily through the parish, accompanied by Katie, who never loved her more sincerely than when she saw her the ministering angel of the needy and infirm.

There was skating for fine days on the Heath Ponds. My father made an ice boat, which did not answer; but its construction and its failure furnished interest and much amusement to the party. In order to remedy the disappointment, my father and Horace fitted up what they called a *chaise glissante*, in which Amabel, Katie, and Miss Taylor, flew swiftly over the ice, to their own great delight, and that of the contrivers.

When there was neither snow nor ice they mounted forest ponies, and galloped into the neighboring market-town, or scampered over the moors.

In-doors, there were enormous glowing fires of peat, and plenty of dispute how peat fires should be made. The ladies worked in worsted, while my father read aloud history, poetry, and Scott's novels. There was backgammon in the evening, battledore and shuttlecock, and a great singing of glees and madrigals. Katie was found to have a sweet soprano voice; and, above all, there was plenty of laughter.

In the month of March my father, the life of the whole

house, went up to town, and ten days after he had left, Miss Taylor got a letter.

"I have heard from Warner," it said, "and he is coming home. He wants you and me, Aunt Kate, to run down before he comes, and overhaul the Cedars. If you leave Sandrock on this errand, do not mention your business to his wife. It might distress her to know that you and I were doing, what, under other circumstances, it would have been her pride and pleasure to have done."

Miss Taylor, the next day, obeyed the call; and while she and my father were at the Cedars, putting aside old Mrs. Warner's clothes and bonnets, looking over her strange hoards, sorting and arranging her cabinets of papers, and getting the house into habitable array, my father received another letter from the Captain, dated "Off Falmouth," directing him to come at once to Portsmouth, and join him there.

Captain Warner's frigate fell in with an outward-bound Indiaman, somewhere off Cape de Verd. As the sea was very calm, and the day fine, a boat full of passengers visited the Magician.

"I believe a relative of yours is come on board, sir—Mr. Bevis," said the midshipman, touching his hat to his captain.

"Mr. Bevis!" said the Captain. "Bevis! I never heard the name even. I don't know such a man."

"I understood him to say, sir, he was your relation."

"Point him out," said the Captain, looking down through the sky-light into his own cabin, where the first lieutenant was dispensing to the visitors the wine and ale of hospitality.

The madeira was very good—the weather very warm. Bevis had been pulling an oar in the boat that brought them to the Magician. He tossed off several glasses, and partook freely of port wine sangaree. He was very merry, free, and jovial, when Captain Warner made his appearance in the cabin. He went up to him, with a free and easy air, saying, "I believe, Captain, you don't know me. I have just married a half sister of your wife. Could you get us permission, on arriving at St. Helena, to see General Buonaparte?"

"Sir!" said the Captain, flushing at the mention of her who had not been named before him for three years; but cooling down, he added, more calmly, "Can you tell me where my wife is now, sir?"

"I don't know where she may be now, for old Talbot died the week before we left, and his family is dispersed in all directions. But I daresay she will do, Captain. She has two zealous young men who will look after her."

"Zealous young men, sir!"

"Come, Captain," said Bevis, with rather a tipsy laugh, "you can't expect a deuced pretty woman, left alone, to go through the world without an admirer. I wasted a little time that way. But Theodosius Ord and Horace Vane are the lucky chaps at present; and I suspect, from what I *know*, that their admiration has cost them a pretty penny."

"Mr. Bevis," shouted the mate of the Indiaman, who was getting his party into their boat. "Can anybody tell me," said he, in a lower voice, "if that fellow will be fit to pull the bow oar? He took too many pulls at this," pursued the mate, holding up the brandy flask, and shaking it at his ear.

Captain Warner crowded all sail upon his ship, he walked the deck day and night, he grew unpopular among his crew, whom he kept squaring the yards and pulling at the braces. The anxiety he suffered seemed to revive his interest in Amabel. He dreamed about her when he slept; as moonlight shimmered on the shrouds, he seemed to see her form. As he passed Falmouth, he fell in with a pilot, by whose boat he sent ashore the letter received by my father at the Cedars, directing him to come and join him at Portsmouth.

When my father went on board the Magician, having travelled all night after he received the letter, Captain Warner met him at the gangway.

"Ord," said he, taking him into his cabin, and tapping with his finger a box that stood upon his table, "I have been pretty undecided the last few weeks, whether to blow my own brains out, or to shoot you. I have heard you were paying attentions to my wife. I ask you, is it true?"

My father was completely taken aback. After a moment's hesitation he made an injudicious answer. "Who told you so?" said he.

"Her own relation, sir—a Mr. Bevis. You do not deny it, sir! Do you mean to tell me to my face that it is so?" cried Captain Warner.

"I deny the imputation of any dishonorable act," cried Theodosius; "but I do say to the face of any man who throws over a wife as virtuous as Mrs. Warner—who takes from her even the protection of his name—who exposes her to be insulted by such a fellow as that Bevis, that he betrays his trust, and almost deserves dishonor."

"Will you tell me, without equivocation—I insist on knowing, sir,—the whole of what you know of her?"

There was something deadly in his look, as he again laid his hand on the box upon his table.

"*There*, sir, is what I know," said Theodosius, throwing down two letters. "The one directed to me is from Dr. Glascock, of Malta, the guardian of her youth, and her best friend. The other is in her own handwriting, and addressed to you. I know the contents, though the seals are yet unbroken. She has told me what she wrote to you. I found it at the Cedars amongst your mother's papers. When you have read both letters, if you wish the sequel of the tale, I am ready to give it you."

With that my father took his leave of Captain Warner.

The Captain sat with the letters before him for some moments, looking vaguely at their directions and their seals. The one found at the Cedars was that which Amabel had written to himself three years before. Little had she expected, when she folded it with kisses, and wondered how, where, and with what feelings he would open it, that it would lie by three years in Mrs. Warner's secretaire, and afterwards in what an unpropitious moment he would break the seal.

There was something humiliating to Captain Warner in the thought of being bearded by a man who half acknowledged having been the lover of his wife; in being reproached by *him* for want of care and tenderness to one towards whom his heart had been beginning to relent.

His life, so late, and sole delight,
Now at his feet submissive in distress,
Creature so fair his reconciliation seeking.

He began to read her letter as if in a dream. He could not fix his mind upon the words, and indeed he was called off continually during its perusal. It seemed to him the officer of the deck had never made such perpetual reference to him before.

After one of these interruptions, he threw her letter down and took up that of the Doctor. It was the narrative from which I have compiled the first part of this biography. It had been written purposely to prove her early love for Felix, and to show, as Dr. Glascock said himself, that "that wisdom was prophetic which cautioned her to avoid all connexion with a country where manners and opinions not conventional were misrepresented, misinterpreted, and misunderstood." The scornful, cynical irony of Dr. Glascock, and the opinion he advanced against her marriage with an Englishman, operated against her in the Captain's mind. Theodosius Ord and Dr. Glascock—both of them had loved her—was *he*, her husband, to be schooled by *them*? Again he took up her own letter. Its self-reproach, its humility, the tenderness of its appeals began to produce its effect upon him. *She* did not seem to blame him for her wrongs as much as others.

"Why did I marry her?" he asked himself; "the flower that has withered in my grasp might have been still blooming. Why was I caught by a mere pretty face? Why did I not place in marriage a sufficient value, upon judgment, knowledge, and experience—qualities which a man requires in the woman who is to bless or curse his home?"

Did the Captain's good angel whisper softly at that moment, "But she is yours, for you *have* married her, for better, for worse, to love and to cherish. Make the best of your choice now?"

Amabel's account of the child moved him. Tears gathered in his eyes as he looked upon a little golden curl she had put into her letter.

He was leaning over the letter, his face buried in his hands, when Captain Annesley, unannounced, came into the cabin.

"What is the matter with you, Warner?" said this friend; "Have you had a letter from my Lords Commissioners? You look as if you were digesting a rap over the knuckles."

"No," said Warner, "it isn't that this time. It's—it's—it's my wife. Read these letters, Annesley,—you are my friend,—and tell me what I am to think of her."

Annesley sat down by the table of the cabin; his countenance was that of a man prepared to look gravely into a suspicious document. He was as much a man of judgment as his friend a man of feeling.

"What do you think of it all?" said Captain Warner, as his friend read the last sheet of Amabel's long letter.

"I think it a very able letter," replied Annesley. "She says she is not guilty. I never thought you had much evidence against her. This is a very able defence—a very well written letter."

"An *able defence*! One does not want an able defence from one's wife," repeated Captain Warner.

He was walking, as he spoke, up and down his narrow cabin. He knew what he *felt*, and it seemed to him the present was a case of *feeling*, but he could not make mere feeling act on the cool judgment of Captain Annesley.

"You see," said he, stopping at length, "I feel that between us there was always something wrong. Upon cool judgment I don't think now that she actually went so far as to carry on an intrigue with that Frenchman. *I don't think she had time*. But I think *she might*. I think she liked him. I think she cared little for me or for my honor."

Annesley rapped upon the table with his nails, and pondered what he should say further. At length he resumed—

"My opinion is, that if you have no more against her than your own suspicion, you are a fool not to believe her own version of the story. A man is more respectable living decently with his wife, than quarrelling with her. I should take her back and keep a tight hand over her."

CHAPTER XV.

"Alas! said she, we ne'er can be
Made happy by compulsion."—COLERIDGE.

My father, after his return from the Magician, went to his room at the Quebec Hotel, and threw himself down to sleep, fatigued by his night travelling. He was waked up about one o'clock in the day by a shake. Captain Warner was standing over him, demanding a full account of his acquaintance with Amabel.

My father started up, and began to give a rather confused narrative of their intercourse and intimacy. So eager was he to make an impression in her favor, that he launched freely into indiscreet eulogy, which, in the present state of the affair, greatly increased the irritation of her husband. Each vehement word thus uttered in her praise, by a man who owned he had once loved her, was felt by Captain Warner as a personal reproach.

He impatiently interrupted my father.

"Where is she now, sir—can you tell me?"

And he stood perfectly silent, struck dumb with surprise, while my father explained that she was living with Miss Taylor, as governess to Katie Warner, spoke of her virtues and her loveliness, of the affection they all bore her, and the esteem in which she was held.

"And her child!" said Captain Warner, recovering himself at length.

"Died long ago," replied my father.

"Poor Belle!" said the Captain (it was years since, even in his heart, he had called his wife poor Belle), "she seemed so very fond of it—I am sorry for her."

"The London coach is ready," said my father, taking advantage of his softness. "Do you wish to go to her at once? They are all at the Hill Farm. Shall I get places to Farnham?"

There were but two vacancies upon the coach, one in front and one behind; so that my father and his companion were separated during the journey, probably to the great relief of both.

At Farnham they took a chaise. It was early spring, but intensely cold. "Too cold for snow," the landlord of the Bush thought, when his opinion was asked; but they had hardly reached the top of the first hill beyond the town, when large thick flakes began to fall, and soon the moorland on all sides of them was deep in snow. A snowy sky hung low over the landscape. The postillion and his horses bent down their heads to break the force of the wind, which blew piercing and sharp—a true snow wind—over the common.

When they came near to the gate of the Hill Farm, at the spot where the pine grove runs into the avenue, they caught sight of a woman taking shelter under a tree.

"That is Katie!" cried my father.

Captain Warner, recognising his daughter, stopped the carriage and sprang out. She knew him at once, and flew into his arms.

"How came you here alone, my child, in all this snow?" said he.

"Where is Mrs. Leonard?" cried my father.

"Mrs. Leonard sent me out of the way, cousin Do." said she, with an arch look at her cousin. "I don't believe she observed a storm was coming. There is a visitor in the drawing-room. Such a tall Frenchman! She has sent me out till his visit is over."

"For God's sake, cousin Katie, be careful what you say," he cried, vainly endeavoring to stop her.

Katie was an *enfant terrible* to my father. Ever since she had again become familiar with him, after the Brighton kissing affair, she had delighted to tease him about his supposed partiality for Amabel. It proved that she, Katie, had no interest in his attentions.

"It is terrible to you, no doubt," she answered, laughing archly, and clinging to the arm of her father, "to know that she is closeted with a French officer."

She felt her father tremble as she spoke, and saw his clouded brow.

"Oh! don't be angry, dear papa," she said. "I was only teasing my cousin. You don't know how devoted he has always been to Mrs. Leonard. I wanted to make him jealous, papa."

"For God's sake, hold your tongue," said Theodosius, in a fierce and angry whisper.

They had by this time come within sight of the house. A chaise was standing at the door, a spectral chaise well sprinkled with fresh snow, which was falling very thickly. As they entered the hall, the door of the sitting-room was opened in their faces, and Amabel came out, with a tall man leaning on a stick, feeble and decrepid. Captain Warner hardly recognised his wife—but the man at her side he knew at once—it was Ferdinand Guiscard.

Colonel Guiscard, the moment he saw Captain Warner, made a step back into the room he had just left, tore in halves a paper on the table, and flung the fragments on the glowing bed of the peat fire.

Amabel saw all was lost from the moment she looked into the set face of her husband. Excuse or explanation she saw would not avail her. Her courage rose with hopelessness,—she feared no longer for herself, but was anxious to prevent collision. She checked the exclamation that was rising to her lips, and fearing, from a sudden movement of the Captain, that he was about to offer some indignity to Col. Guiscard, she placed herself between them, standing in the doorway, with one hand on the lintel.

"Do not strike him," she said. "He saved your child's life once. You are revenged on him enough. Your shot made him a cripple."

Captain Warner thrust his hands into the pockets of the great-coat he wore over his uniform.

"It is over!" he cried, turning away. "It is over! Oh! my God——!"

Amabel made a hurried sign to Theodosius to get Colonel

Guiscard into his carriage. She flew to the side of her husband, but he motioned her away. She saw it was of no use to humble herself before him. She recovered her self-possession, and paused, pale and speechless, supporting herself by the side of the drawing-room door.

"Give us an explanation, for God's sake," cried my father, coming back.

"What is the use of explanation?" she replied. "I have lived for years hoping for this moment. I have labored to advance it—it has kept me alive. It is not now as when we parted. I am worthy of his confidence—and you know it! I have earned the right to be trusted and believed. Is this mere circumstance—beyond my own control . . . "

She burst into tears, and bent her head, covering her eyes with her hand; saying, "Thy will be done!" "Leonard," she said, after a pause, "will you believe the explanation I can give you of this scene—or treat it like the letter that I wrote you by the bedside of our child? Did you believe that letter?"

Katie Warner, who had just begun to comprehend the scene, was clinging round her father's neck, crying, "Speak kindly to her—comfort her! She is so good—so good—dear, dear papa!"

"This is no place for you, my child," he said; and starting up, rushed out of the door. In a few moments he came back.

"The chaise has left. Give me my hat," he said. "I shall walk to Farnham."

"Mrs. Leonard, rouse yourself! It is not yet too late," exclaimed my father.

"Too late? Too late for what! Is it for happiness?" she cried. "It is too late for that—too late!"

She seemed bewildered by the sudden blow. But, as Captain Warner again opened the front door, admitting a fierce gust of wind and snow, she seemed to recover her recollection.

"Hear me, Captain Warner," she said, and there was some thing in her voice which arrested his steps and commanded his

attention ; " We are now separated for ever. I would not now resign my liberty to the man who neither trusts me nor believes me. But for the sake of the friends who are made unhappy by all this, who have loved me, sheltered, trusted me, I speak ! If you have read my letter you know the circumstances that occurred before we parted." The captain made a slight sign with his head. " I can add nothing whatever to what I wrote you then, and from that statement I take nothing away. I have never had any sentiment but strong dislike towards the man whom you found here. I have never, since the moment that you left, seen him—heard news of him—or wished ever to see, ever to hear. It seems, however, that for some time past, spurred by remorse, he has been in search of me. I do not understand," said she, piteously, " how he came to find me out in this retreat. You remember, Mr. Ord, that literary man who made himself so pleasant in the coach when we were going on to Brighton ? He says he heard from *him* that I was here. That man mentioned, you remember, having formerly known him. They met again in London, the other day. You remember the conversation, Mr. Ord, about the name of Amabel. How could that conversation have betrayed me ?"

" It was my fault—my fault," cried my father. " I trod on his toes. Fool that I was—I have ruined you !"

" This man, when he found Colonel Guiscard had come to England in search for me, made no scruple in putting him upon my track. He went to Brighton, found out I was here, arrived at F—— last night, and to-day came over to see me. You see," she continued, turning to my father, and glancing at her dress, which showed unusual care, " I had read of the arrival of the Magician. I was sure you would go at once to Captain Warner. I expected you to-day. When they told me I was wanted by a gentleman, I made sure that it was my husband. I sent Katie out of the way ; I could not let her be present when I met her father. What I felt when I discovered who it was—when I had to meet that bad man without witnesses, knowing that you Theodosius, and Miss Taylor, and even Horace were away—need not be spoken ?"

"Where is Horace?" cried my father. "How came he to be away?"

"Horace has gone to-day over to the Holt, to see the Ranger—"

"You were going on to tell us what the Frenchman said to you," prompted my father—not liking the pause she made after the last sentence, or the forgetful, dreamy look in her eyes.

"True," she replied, starting, as if his question had roused her. "He had been visited by remorse, he told me, for his conduct, and desired my forgiveness, which I freely gave him. He brought me a deed too, saying that he had not probably very long to live—and by this deed I should become possessed of all the property of his brother in Brittany. Could I touch that money?" she said, turning to her husband. "Would you have had me take it? Even though your generosity to me has made you poor;—though I should have brought something thereby to the common purse in the event of our reconciliation—something that might have been settled on your children——"

She looked with piteous eyes into his face, but there saw no relenting.

"*Qui s'excuse—s'accuse*," said he. It was about the only quotation that he used to employ. To him it was very convenient. In him the perceptive, not the reasoning powers, were acute. He could not be touched by an argument. All explanations, exculpations, and reasonings in self-defence, he called excuses.

"He does not believe me. I knew he would not," she said, to Theodosius, who stood by. "I told you so."

Captain Warner opened the front door, and went out into the storm.

"Follow him," cried Amabel to my father. "He cannot walk to F—— through all this snow. Tell him I am going. I shall pass the night at the Cottage. All is over."

My father obeyed her. She went up stairs, put on her shawl and bonnet, and wrapped her husband's old blue camlet cloak about her, almost covering her head.

As she made these preparations, the expression of her face was strangely fixed. Katie crept into her room. She was crying bitterly.

"Mamma—mamma," she said, pressing close to her. "Do you not love me? Why do you smile?"

"Because I cannot help it, Katie," said Amabel, sitting down, with a sort of laugh. "My child, I want my self-command, or I should be hysterical."

"Mamma, why is your bonnet on? Do not go—you are not fit to go," said Katie Warner, removing her bonnet from her head.

"I must be growing very wicked," said Amabel, at length. "I do not realize these events. I do not feel sorry to give you up, my child. I don't feel sorrow for myself, or for your father. I don't feel at all. Oh! Katie, it is dreadful!"

"Mamma, I shall put you to bed," said Katie, feeling that while her step-mother's hand and cheek were burning hot, her whole frame shook with a sudden shiver.

"Where is your father?" she resumed, when, having drunk a glass of water, she felt somewhat more composed.

"I see papa," said Katie, looking out of the window, "walking up and down the avenue with cousin Do."

"Katie," said Amabel, "when I am gone I commit your father and both your cousins to your care. Your cousin, Mr. Ord, will, perhaps, reproach himself for this affair. Some day, if you find he blames himself, show him this, dear—it is my last message," she said, opening a Bible she had taken up to carry with her in her hand. "I can't find it," she said piteously, vaguely turning over the leaves. "You must find it, dear. It is that passage, in which Joseph tells his brethren that what had happened was the will of God, and not their fault. And oh! Katie, my sweet daughter, be a good child to your father. Pity him, my darling;—remember that his home is desolate. He has no mother—no wife. Do not injure your influence, by taking what you may fancy is my side. But, if a softer mood should ever come, tell him, dear Katie, I would have died to win him back again." Her voice seemed to die away into a sigh. "I love him—I hardly know how this love of mine was

born—from pity, self-reproach, admiration, perhaps from gratitude. They say the love of an Englishwoman springs most often from gratitude—ask your father, in that day, to let you see my letter. Before God, every word is true in that letter. I was a careless, an impatient, an unloving wife, but nothing *worse*—not *worse*, dear.”

So saying, she held out her arms to the young girl, who, weeping, threw herself upon her breast. For several minutes, Amabel held her in her arms, stroking back the smooth, bright hair from her fair brow, and covering it with kisses.

She went out of the house by the back gate. The pelting of the pitiless storm was on her head. She skirted the pine grove, and gained the by-road that led her by the mill-stream.

Drenched from head to foot, but insensible to physical pain, she reached the cottage, entering her old home by the path at the foot of the garden.

“Lad a massy!” cried the Widow Cæsar, who kept the empty house, when she came in by the back door.

“Don’t say anything,” said Amabel. “Get me ready a bed, and a cup of hot tea, if you have any.”

“What is that, Mrs. Cæsar? What can be coming next?” she cried, as a few moments after the bell of the front gate rang with sudden clamor.

“It’s a post-chay and a gentleman,” said the widow, coming back. “They got on to the heath, and a’most lost their way. He is took ill, and the boy is bringing him in. He is e’en a’most dead. He might ha’ took him into Sandrock to the inn, but this was the first tenement.”

“Let him in—ask him in,” said Amabel, standing up. “He is welcome—oh! extraordinarily welcome, I am sure, to-day.”

The post-boy was bringing in meanwhile the insensible and crippled form of Col. Guiscard, seized, as Mrs. Cæsar saw at once by a twist in his face, with a sudden stroke of palsy.

She gave him, however, only a sudden glance. She was more intent on watching the wild strange look of Amabel.

“Dear heart—what is it?” exclaimed she. “Surely you’re not a going to be taken ill with a fever?”

“I passed over the mill-stream,” replied Amabel. “The

waters tossing, foaming, gurgling, rushed under the bridge. The mill wheel was whirring. I believe I have got all these together in my head."

"Sit down. Sit down and rest ye; and I'll make your dish of tea," said Mrs. Cæsar. But Amabel drew her cloak over her head, went out to the gate, and spoke to the post-boy.

"Have you ever a barn where I could put my 'osses up?" he said, addressing her.

"Put them to again," said Amabel, getting into the chaise, and drawing out her purse. "Light your lamps and drive me into Farnham."

"I couldn't no how, ma'am," said the post-boy. "It is such a night of weather."

"Drive to the Doctor's. I must send him help," she said, paying no heed. "When we get to F—— you shall have *this*—I have plenty of money."

The post-boy saw gold through her silk netting.

"Perhaps I could ride on horseback and get through?" said he. "Charley, here, is the better 'oss of the two. But Lord bless you, ma'am, you wouldn't get the Doctor!"

"If you refuse to drive me, I must walk," said Amabel.

The post-boy, bribed by her tempting gold, and shamed by her determination, put up the steps and closed the carriage door. It took him some time to fix into his lamps two little bits of candle ends; then drawing his cap over his face, and beating his numb arms across his breast, he prepared to face the storm.

CHAPTER XVI

God be with thee, my beloved—God be with thee,
Else alone thou goest forth,
Thy face unto the north,
Moor and pleasance all around thee and beneath thee,
Looking equal in one snow.

The Valediction.—MRS. BROWNING.

HER faculties were benumbed. They had been overstrained. A mist hung over her understanding.

The carriage rocked and trembled along the rutty road. The fierce north wind blew hail and snow against the glass. She sat with one hand covering her eyes. All sorts of scenes, and scraps of personal dramatic action—passages of her youth, events that had been, or that might have been, went surging through her fancy. Attractive fragments of autobiography arranged themselves in her mind. She was amused and interested, as she might have been by the perusal of a story. Everything about her seemed unreal. Her spirit had passed into Kilmeny's "land of vision."

By-and-by, after severe jolting, the carriage came suddenly to a stand. She heard the post-boy shouting aloud. It was the first thing she had noticed since her journey had begun. He cracked his whip; the horses floundered in a deep drift of snow; the chaise trembled and shook, then turned over on its side.

On creeping out of the window she found the horses up to their breasts in the snow. The chaise had wandered from the road, had got into a kind of hollow to the right of the high-road that leads to F——, and had come suddenly up against a fence which parted a small cultivated oasis from the moor. Across the snow the faint few lights of the town at midnight were gleaming in the distance, blurred and misty through the snowy haze. The storm beat more terribly than ever, the wind rushing with wild fury and fierce strength over the open moor.

The postillion was benumbed, terrified by the storm, and alarmed about his cattle. One horse lay exhausted, half buried in the snow-drift; the other kicked and floundered as the boy attempted to detach him from the carriage.

Amabel stood by, watching the scene, as though it were a spectacle got up to amuse her.

"I am going on," she said, at length, putting into the post-boy's hand a piece of gold, which he transferred to his mouth.

"There ought to be a house down yonder," said he, pointing with his thumb into the hollow. "If you get to it, please to send me help. I'm a'most froze, and Charley here, I think, is gone. What ever will master say to me!"

His mind was taken up by the situation of his horses, and he paid little attention to the probability of her being able to reach the house through the darkness and the storm.

She drew her cloak around her, faced the full force of the wind, and disappeared into the blackness. The snow that had fallen was moist, light, and feathery. At every step she sank up to her knees. Constantly stumbling, constantly rising, she pressed on. She crossed the fence, which caused the drift by which the carriage had been stopped, and found herself descending into a kind of valley. She heard the rush of running water, and followed the sound, until she found herself beside the little stream which flows by F——, and by her home at Sandrock. She struggled along its banks, for some distance down the stream, seeking for a bridge. The snow was less deep by the river-side than it had been upon the common. She paused, weary and spent, spread her cloak upon the snow, and sat down to rest upon it. Her clothes were wringing wet. She took off her bonnet and her gloves, and laid them down beside her. She watched the snow-flakes whitening her cloak, and powdering her hair. "*Madame la Vierge file sa quenouille,*" she said, repeating a poetical Bretonism for a snow-storm; and she laughed. A strange, wild, tuneless laugh, which the wind bore away over the moor so fast, that she could scarcely catch the strangeness of the sound.

She started up. "I must push on," she cried, "and yet I am *so weary*. I have strange pains in my limbs—a ringing sound of bells is in my head. And yet my head seems clearer than it did. Suppose I sing." And her former reflection about the distaff of the Virgin having probably put Brittany into her mind, she began to sing a low, sad ballad, taught her by poor Felix, or rather the French imitation of a *guerz*, still heard in Upper Brittany.

Oh ! dites moi, ma mère, ma mie
Pourquoi les varints* sonnent ainsi ?
Ma fille on fait la procession
Tout à l'entour de la maison.
Oh ! dites moi, ma mère, ma mie
Quel habit mettrai-je aujourd'hui ?

* Bells.

Prenez du noir—prenez du blanc—
 Mais le noir est plus convenant.
 Oh ! dites moi, ma mère, ma mie
 Pour qui la terre est rafraichie ?
 Je ne puis plus vous le cacher,
 Votre mari est enterré.

Again—again—again the notes and words of this sad plaint rang out upon the blast. She was hurrying on, seeming to think that, if she stopped singing, her strength would fail. She had found a little bridge which crossed the stream. She was now upon a road somewhat sheltered by hedges. She was bareheaded—her bonnet and cloak having been left lying on the spot where she had paused to rest. In one of the many falls which bruised and jarred her, but from which she continued to rise and to push on with unshaken resolution, the comb had fallen from her head. Every fierce gust of the wild wind set her hair streaming, and she was forced at every step to stop and put it from her eyes.

Again she was beyond the friendly shelter of a hedge, and on the open moor. The lights of F—— were gleaming far behind. Struggling with the wind, and singing as she went, she pressed on across the heath. She had fallen in with no sign of any human dwelling. Every now and then came a lull in the storm—a silence more terrific than its fury. Amabel knew that the wind was gathering up its strength; she staggered as the spirit of the storm flew past, or, stooping down, she met its buffet kneeling on the snow. There were no rocks, nor hills, nor walls, to echo back the roaring of the tempest. It seemed to sweep alone under the leaden sky, over the open moor.

The last song she had sung was a Breton Hymn on Hell;—Dantesque and terrible, probably the work of some young Celtic David, keeping sheep upon a Breton moor. I will give it in a translation :—

Hearken, sinners, can ye tell
 Aught of such a place as hell ?
 'Tis a furnace where the flame
 Roareth day and night the same;
 And the lime-kiln's fiercest breath,
 Which to near is certain death,
 When its glowing flag-stones swell,
 Is but smoke to flames of hell !

There no light will gleam for ever—
 Fire burneth like a fever.
There no hope will enter more,
 God Himself hath barred the door.
 Fire will your footsteps bound!
 Fire rages all around.
 Hungry sinner, eat the fire!
 Or, if water you desire,
 O'er yon river's burning bed
 Brimstone flows,—and molten lead!

Weeping through Eternity,
 All your tears will make a sea,
 But that sea, howe'er it swell,
 Will not make a drop in hell.
 Tears shall never quench hell-fire,
 Tears will make it mount the higher;
 You will hear, more loud than groans,
 The marrow bubbling in your bones.

From its trunk your head they'll sever,
 Yet you'll have to live for ever!
 Devils ranged in rival bands
 Toss it to each other's hands,—
 While immortal you stand by,
 For in hell you cannot die!
 They shall roast your body whole
 Till you feel it turn to coal;
 And this fearful torment o'er
 You shall live to suffer more!

.

The song was cruel, fierce, Celtic, and material, but full of a wild power. It seemed to suit her frenzied state of mind. The storm, her suffering, the fever in her brain, incited her to sing it again and again. She sang it with fierce energy—her voice rising, in some notes, louder than the storm.

Suddenly she shrieked. A flame—it seemed to her the flames of hell—shot up almost at her feet. She felt the air around her growing hot.

The wind ceased, or rather flew by her, without seizing her each time in its wild grasp. She was under the lee of some wall that protected her.

Fire again shot out. She heard the rumble of a roaring flame;—she felt a hot breath on her face. Again she shrieked wildly—loudly—in frenzy. Her voice was this time louder than the tumult of the storm.

"'Tis a furnace where the flame
 Roareth day and night the same;

And the lime-kiln's fiercest breath,
Which to near is certain death,
When its glowing flagstones swell,
Is but smoke to flames of hell !"

Faintly she tried to sing these words again. She turned to fly. Forth, forth, forth into the void of night—into the face of the wind—into the strong grasp of the storm. Anywhere—anywhere to be beyond the light of that fierce, shooting flame, beyond the furnace blast of that mysterious fire !

As she strove to rush back on the heath, and to escape, she struck her hand. The wall she touched was burning. The side of her hand was blistered and smarting with pain. She shrieked again—she struggled, and fell senseless on a bed of heated ashes.

* * * * *

Two men came out with lanterns. They were rude men, who gained their bread by making brick.

Their brick-kilns and their hut arē still standing. You may see them any day in the midst of the great heath, a mile or two from Farnborough.

One of them protested he had heard a woman's shriek. The other, after a brief survey of the glowing kiln, declared it was all stuff. "Bill had dreamed a bad dream, and heard the howling of the tempest through the out-houses."

As he said this, he stumbled over the heap of spent ashes thrown out from the kiln the day before, and cried out, "'Ees—bring us the light, Bill. 'Ere she be now."

Bill came up to the spot, and the two men stood looking at her.

"An' what can us do wi' such a thing as she?" asked the elder man of Bill, contemptuously stirring her with his foot at the same time.

"I'm just no sure," said Bill, as he turned her over, and drew out the long wet hair that was wrapped round her. "I'm just no sure that she beant a mad 'ooman scaped out o' t' Asylum."

"May be," said the other, his eye catching sight of her watch and chain. "Bring her in to th' ould 'ooman, Bill.

"She'll keep her safe till called for, let her be as mad as Bedlam. May be there'll be a bit of a reward offered. Here's a bit o' th' kiln is started, and the flame is coming out o' t' side. Lord ! Lord ! Bill, what a night !"

END OF THE THIRD PART.

Part Fourth.

Loved wilt thou be ? Then Love by thee must first be given ;
No purchase money else avails beneath the heaven.

R. C. TRENCH.—*Century of Couplets*

PART IV.

CHAPTER I.

Trust no Future howe'er pleasant,
Let the dead past bury its dead ;
Act—act in the living Present,
Heart within, and God o'er head.
H. W. LONGFELLOW

HORACE TO AMABEL.

Hill Farm, July 26, 1820.

You must not be displeased with me, my dearest friend, for the earnest desire that impels me to address you. Yet, having prepared to write, I know not how to begin. Last night, as I lay awake, my whole soul seemed to pour itself out in an imaginary letter; to-day I experience that embarrassment which springs from fulness of the heart—an embarrassment which hinders vigorous statement in speech, and holds the pen suspended over the letter.

Why—ah! why, dearest Amabel, did that vile man come to this place? I do not understand why God has given an accident such power!

The ways of Providence are very dark. I can understand why trial came to you at first, in those old days when nothing had developed the woman's soul within you. It was good for you to be afflicted *then*—but now, Amabel—*now*, what is the use of any further disappointment?

Why could not Providence have made you happy your own way? Surely, in the language of the Holy Book, you have been “purified, and made white, and tried.” In your face glows, they tell me, all the “beauty of holiness”—the sound of your voice brings the blessing of peace.

We were sitting yesterday at breakfast in the cool west

parlor. Katie, Miss Taylor, my new tutor, and I. Katie has taken your place as president of the table. It is beautiful to see her walking in your steps—conforming to that ideal image of womanly perfection that she has seen in you, speaking cheerful words when I know that her young heart is sad, and keeping up her own spirits that she may sustain those of others.

As Katie was presiding over the breakfast tray, engaging, or endeavoring to engage, the rest of us in conversation, the door flew open, and your old friend Dr. Frost *almost* rushed into the room. Katie says his flaxen wig was all awry, and only half the buttons of his trim black gaiters fastened. Never had the venerable man been seen abroad in such a state of *déshabille* before. He had walked up the hill so very fast that he came in panting. He made no reply to our exclamations of surprise, but began shaking hands all round. I knew, from the jolly pressure of his fat old palm, that he was the bearer of good news.

“What do you think it is?” said he. “Be prepared. . . . I have got a letter. She is alive, and in London.”

“Oh! Doctor Frost,” cried Katie, with a little scream; and, springing up from where she sat, she threw her arm round his old neck in her caressing way, and made him show her your letter.

I wish you could have seen the joy those few brief lines conveyed! But why were they so brief? Do you mistrust our confidence and affection?

I can almost write your letter in one line. “Dear Sir, Will you cause any personal effects I may have left behind to be forwarded from Sandrock to the inclosed direction.”

Where have you been?—How came you in town?—How have we failed to discover you?

Ah! had you seen poor Katie rush up stairs and tear off all her mourning!

The trunks forwarded in obedience to your note have been packed by her own hands. She bids me tell you, with the assurance of her love, that if not your child by birth, she will be your child in spirit. That if she can but live in the resolutions she has made her life will owe you its complexion. She

says you will find your desk gone and many of your papers. They are in the possession of her father.

On the evening of that dreadful day when you left Sandrock, while I was still detained by the great storm at the house of the Ranger, Captain Warner and Theodosius, I am told, remained walking till night-fall up and down the avenue. They appear to have been kept from freezing by excitement. When they came in Theodosius joined his cousin Katie in the parlor, while Captain Warner went straight to his room. Theodosius carried him a cup of tea later in the evening, and found him gone to bed.

"You had better say to her," said he, "that I shall go away as soon as the storm is past, and take my daughter. Tell her I shall provide for her. I hope to do everything reasonable,—but I never want to see her face again." "She is gone, sir," said Theodosius. "Gone! Where the devil is she gone to in this storm!" cried Capt. Warner. "Gone to the Cottage, sir," said Do. "Heavens and earth, sir!" cried the Captain, "do you call it like a man—do you call it humanity—to drive a woman out on such a night to seek for shelter in an empty hovel! One would think I was a tyrant—a barbarian—that it were better to fly from me and brave the elements. I am not aware I ever gave her cause to look on me in that light. We might have been happy in our married life, if people had not put themselves between me and her."

At this moment a fearful blast of wind and sleet struck the loose easement. "By heavens," cried the Captain, "I will not stand this any more. A woman is a woman, and ought to be treated as a woman—which I know, if you do not, sir. If no one else will go to-night and see if she is safe—I shall, sir!"

"While she was under my care," he continued, "I never suffered the winds of heaven to visit her cheek too roughly. She hardly would venture her foot upon the ground for delicateness and tenderness. Now see, what she has come to under your advice—and such as yours—to be turned out on such a night as this like a dog. Who would have thought it? Who would have believed it? A tender and delicate young creature led astray by evil counsellors! When I married her, sir, she

was like a tender, loving little fawn, and after a few weeks she grew cold, constrained, and anxious. It was the bad advice of people like yourself, who called themselves her friends—teaching her to live in dread of her own husband, who—I vow to heaven!—would have laid his life down at her feet. All I wanted of her was to be, and to seem happy. Instead of which she grieved and pined, and quarrelled with my relatives, and had her heart still set on an old foolish love, and got her reputation blasted by this Guiscard. And now that years have passed, you see to-night an epitome of the same story. No, sir, I am not like the Royal Family of France, who have ‘nothing remembered, nothing forgot,’ during their years of emigration.”

The next day, by early dawn, the Captain was on foot—not earlier, however, than Theodosius Ord bound on the same errand. It had left off snowing, and they met each other in the avenue, each steering his course towards the Cottage. When they reached it, Theodosius went alone into the kitchen, and there learned from Mrs. Caesar that Col. Guiscard lay dying in the house, and that you had gone over to F——, in the fore-part of the night, during the height of the storm.

Mrs. Caesar followed him out to the gate, declaring “that the dear lady could never, she was sure, have got alive that night across the heath,—many and many a man and horse had perished on less dreadful nights upon the pathless moor.”

“Which is the road—which is the road?”—was all that Captain Warner could exclaim, on hearing her opinion. Both he and Theodosius had long poles, torn from a hop-field, in their hands, to sound the snow-drifts, and at every step each sank into the wet snow up to his knees. They pushed their way about a mile across the heath, and then turned back to get the help of our farm laborers.

Katie wanted to serve them with hot coffee, but the Captain would take nothing. He asked her for brandy, which she put into pocket-flasks for all the party. The men trudged first—stout farming men accustomed to the road. They did more in half an hour, with half the exertion, than Theo. and Captain Warner had been able to accomplish in double the time,

hindered as they were by agitation and excitement. The men pushed on in single file, taking turns to lead the party, keeping a bold front, but failing to beat a path—the snow being so wet that there was no crust, and at every step, in American phrase, “they slumped”—that is, broke through.

When they had reached Fox Hill, and were almost into F——, they saw a party of men on the heath to the right, gathered round some object in the distance, which Theodosius’s quick eye made out to be a broken carriage. They made their way across the common to the spot, and there found the chaise of the Bush Inn. The post-boy had passed the night at the cabin, in the midst of a little oasis, which Katie says you will remember to the right of Fox Hill by the run. When they found that he could give them no account of you, Captain Warner gave up hope—but his despair of success redoubled his exertions. Those assembled round the carriage quitted it at once to join his search, while three or four persons were sent off to F—— to inquire for you. It was soon ascertained that you had not been there. Theodosius says your husband’s agitation was terrible to witness; there was a sort of reckless energy in his search, which led him hither and thither, sounding the snow wherever any ridge or drift appeared to indicate a body. He said not a word to any of the men, but shook his head hopelessly as he turned over the snow. Once or twice they heard him saying, with a groan, “Oh! my poor wife!—oh! my poor Bella!”

One of the men discerned a faint red stain beside the river. He fancied it was blood. One of the party directed your husband’s attention to some other place, while Theodosius and the rest went down to examine it. The bloody tinge they had observed was the scarlet lining of your cloak shining through the snow. They disinterred the cloak, and found your bonnet and gloves. The inference was, that you were in the river. While the men, full of horror, were gathered round the spot, some proposing to set off to F——, to procure means to drag the river, or to the nearest farm to fill a cart with straw and bring it to the spot that it might be in readiness; discuss-
the probable manner of your death, whether by suicide or

accident, as with their poles they sounded the river at its brink; they forgot to conceal the agitation of their movements from Captain Warner. He discovered that something had been found—he overheard the words, “a cart to take the body.” He hurried to the spot, insisting on his right to receive you. “She is my wife,” cried he. “They made her fancy I was cruel. Her fear of me has killed her! Give her to me,” he cried, throwing open his bosom; “let me hold her.” It was long before they could convince him that they had not found your corpse. They laid your cloak upon his arm; he recognised it, and was overcome. Theodosius kept near him, resolute and active, and, to all appearance, calm; but Johnny Cobbett told me that he was pale as marble. By-and-by the captain’s strength began to fail, and, while they dragged the river, he sat down upon the snow. The activity and bustle of the men employed seemed to jar upon his feelings. When dragging the river proved of no use, parties went over the heath towards Moor-park to look for you in that direction. They made wild, impossible surmises—some even fancied you might have found your way into one of the caves upon that property, which were hiding-places during the civil war, and the retreat, as you may remember, some years since of a poor madman. One man was a good deal hurt in trying to get up a cliff to the entrance of one of them. They sent one of their number back to the hill-farm to bring your dogs, but their scent failed to trace you.

Later in the day they brought the captain home again. I had then returned from my visit to the Ranger. Theodosius said it was a touching sight to see poor little Katie rush into his arms, and lay her head upon his breast, while he rested his cheek upon it, and wept over her. They sat a long time clasped in each other’s arms. The first words he said were, “My child, you must get the deepest mourning.”

“Oh! papa—papa,” she cried, “she is not gone! Oh, dear papa, I loved her so!”

Theodosius came up to me. “She is gone, Horace,” said he. “We will mourn her together.”

Amabel! it is not for me to tell of manly tears wept for your

fate—of choking sobs which, in the silence of long nights, each stifled in his pillow. How each sought to bear his grief apart, and to subtract his share out of the common sorrow. How we sat down to meals where nothing could be eaten, but at which we all appeared, each hoping the rest might be encouraged by his presence to take food. How, day after day, we rode down to the brink of that dark swollen river, where men, no longer sanguine in their search, were kept dragging up the mud and weeds by the promise of high wages; nor will I tell you of the Sabbath when we all, weeping and stricken, assembled in our pew. Once, in the service, an unexpected sob from Theodosius Ord seemed to startle the congregation.

Miss Taylor had come back to us. She pitied and excused every one; was betrayed into a thousand inconsistencies of speech—never into an inconsistency of kindly feeling. Your husband said very little to us; but the silent sympathy of his daughter seemed everything to him. Katie seemed to be teaching him the power and the worth of a true woman. She was always clinging to his side, directing him in all he did, with a calm soothing influence to which he made no opposition; comforting him more, it seemed to us, by a sense of her sympathy than by the power of her words. Sometimes, when released for a few moments from the side of “poor papa,” she would walk apart with Theodosius. She used, you know, to be afraid of him, but all that had disappeared.

I, too, might, perhaps, have been the confidant of her sorrow, but I was less ready to talk of you than he. It pained me a little that they found so close a bond of union in their loss.

She sat beside her father when he looked over your papers. She bids me tell you, that all he gave her she has sent to you. They relate principally to your experience and your feelings. He charged Katie to return Theodosius his letters. For his own share he kept your account books, your book of receipts, and your journal, the baptismal register of your child, the little paper with his hair, the bills relating to his funeral, and (which he afterwards gave Katie) the drawing of the grave under the yews. Theodosius said something to Katie about the Vicar of S——, and Katie communicated it to her father. He rode

over to S—— alone, and spent two days there. On his return I heard him desire Katie to get out a pearl cross you used to wear, and send it to the Vicar's lady as a remembrance of you.

He wrote to the Admiralty for employment, and got an order to take command of the *Alcastor* frigate, forming part of the blockading force on the coast of Africa. On receiving the appointment, he and Ord had a long interview, the nature of which we were not told, but it produced a happy change in their relations with each other. Theodosius has sailed with him to Africa.

The day before they left, Katie and her father went through the village and to Churt, visiting the cottagers. In this walk your husband heard your praises, and learned the deep devotion and respect paid to your memory. They pitied the "poor gentleman," asked questions about you after their way, and condoled with him on his bereavement. Everywhere he scattered money, and every cottage, Katie says, they left in tears. He has taken your puppy, Piero, to his ship. Barba is dead. He pined when you had gone, attached himself to Katie and the captain, and died one night upon her bed. I had nearly forgotten to tell you that the French Colonel, at the cottage, partially recovered. At any rate, he got well enough to go away. A valet came down to him from town, and he paid Mrs. Cæsar handsomely.

I have got a new tutor from Oxford; a solemn prig, but a good scholar. He has revived many of my forgotten tastes, and some of my old ambition. When I lost my sight, I was almost prepared for my "little go," and I begin to believe I may easily recover that preparation. Adopting your favorite maxim, "that man is to mould circumstance," I do not see why I should not go creditably through college. At any rate a college life will offer me variety—the hope of success will stimulate exertion, and both are necessary.

Will you refuse to write to us, dear Amabel? Remember that we are ignorant of where you have been hidden during our long search, as well as of what you are now doing. *We* need *your* sympathy and encouragement in all our hopes and endeavours; are *you* above the influence of *ours*?

How shall I impress you so strongly with the wish of my whole soul that you should write, that you *must* answer me? Nay; I will close my letter without urging you. I have such perfect faith in all you have done, or can ever do, that I only say—write, I implore you, write for all our sakes, unless you have some cause for silence so sufficient that you feel it justifies your giving us who love you, deep, deep pain, instead of a strengthening and refreshing pleasure.

The black paper of my writing machine is nearly worn away; and indeed I fear to trust myself to write more lest I should urge on you my hope and break my resolution.

With all respect, affection, and devotion,

Your faithful friend,

HORACE VANE.

AMABEL TO HORACE.

Great Ormond Street, August 3, 1820.

DEAR HORACE,

You well knew that the simple expression of your interest in my fate, would be more powerful than any eloquent persuasions. I did not mean to write—nor do I think it well to keep up this correspondence, but I must answer your long letter, partly, because it affected me very much, and partly because its first words contain an arraignment of Providence, and show a want of appreciation of what I conceive to be my true position.

I have long known that it was good for me that I have been afflicted, but I now know it has been well that Mr. Ord's scheme for my happiness was permitted to fail. More than ever I felt this when I read your letter. The tears my husband shed over what he supposed to be my fate were tears of manly pity. His better feelings were called out in favor of my womanhood. He wept with some feeling of self-reproach—with some remembrance of the days when we were happy. But for the sad manner in which he fancied I had met my death, no tears from his eyes would have fallen on my sepulchre, and when he knows that I am yet alive, he will blush at having shed them. For years after our separation I daily assured myself that the appeal I

had made to him in writing would have its effect upon him. I believed and hoped he would restore to me his confidence, and love me.—I see now that the hope I nursed was vain. I do not desire to be acknowledged without affection. I can make my way alone through life. I have proved I can.

I have cut adrift, dear Horace, from my past. I will no longer labor at the wretched task of making it the platform of my Present or my Future. It clogged my steps through the three years I lived at Sandrock, and had I joined my husband, as I hoped, I see now that it would have chained me more than ever. It was a sad and evil Past. But, Horace, it is dead to me at length. I will no longer be

“A slave, bound face to face with death, till death.”

For I have conquered. Henceforth I cast the Past behind my back, and will work out my own Future. Do you not see—I see it now—that had such a reconciliation as a third party can effect been brought about between us, by the efforts of your cousin, we could not have been happy without that love and mutual trust to which the very steps taken to effect our reünion would have imposed a barrier?

Imagine the case other than it was—imagine Col. Guiscard had not crossed my path after the separation,—imagine that my husband and Mr. Ord had found Lucretia at her spinning—remember that my husband had consented to see his wife, not from choice on his own part, but persuasion. To be persuaded by others to love abstract excellence or penitence, and to love the lovingness that loves us, are very different things.

We might again have lived together, and have worn the marriage yoke with cold respectability—but I am convinced there could have been little happiness for either. He would always have mistrusted the wife he had been persuaded into forgiving, nor could I ever have won my way into his affection. I should have pined under a sense of his mistrust. I see that it is better as it is. Believe it so, as I do, dearest Horace.

The certainty that struck Hope dead
Hath left contentment in its stead ;
And that is next to best.

I am writing in the two pair of stairs back room of a large and once handsome house, where I have taken lodgings. This part of London was the fashion in Queen Anne's time. It is far from the scene of my toil, but this gives me a walk which I am glad to force myself to take every day.

Could you look in upon me at this moment, you would think me a lady of leisure. I am sitting at my little table—it is after dinner, about four o'clock. My dinner I cooked myself in the middle of the day. You would be rather surprised at the development of my talents for cooking, sweeping, dusting, and all other things in which a woman ought to be instructed. I know now the full value of a sausage. With a pound of this comestible, I can almost rival the reputation of the French Marshal's *chef de cuisine*, who sent up during the straitness of a siege, seven courses and a dessert, made out of his master's leathern slippers. Did you know there were upwards of three hundred ways of cooking eggs? Have you measured the capacities *ad infinitum* of a salad?

To you, your dinner is—*your dinner*. A daily event too much a matter of course to be anticipated—too little varied to inspire interest; but to one who has to earn, and buy, and cook, as well as eat the meal, it becomes the event of the day, the prominent circumstance, and every little thing upon your table, from the pepper you bought yesterday, to the potatoe which, if not eaten to-day, will be *sauté à la maître d'hôtel* to-morrow, has an individual interest and a history.

Life is full of interests, dear Horace,—I am bound to it by as many tiny cords as those which confined Gulliver in Lilliput; and if life has many interests to offer *me*, what may it not have for you and others! I am interested in my fellow-dwellers in this house. Without uncovering more than this one roof, I could spin you a longer and a purer version of the *Diable Boiteux*. In return for some little instruction I am giving to their children, my fellow-lodgers bring me up my water and coals.

The thing that, perhaps, would the most surprise you, could you gaze on me and my apartment in a magic glass, would be my costume. I am wearing a brown stuff gown, with large

pockets, and an apron. My hair is put up under a quaint starched cap, with a high crown. I wear a long black ribbon at my side, from whence depends a pair of scissors.

Sometimes I walk in the Park, still in this strange costume. Nobody looks the little brown woman in the face; I am equally secure from insult and observation. On Sundays I resume my former dress, for Annie, Ned, and little Joe, are here. It is a pleasant interlude. The horn of plenty empties itself on Sundays on our table. I take them to some quiet church, where we sit in the aisle amongst the poor and the stranger. Sometimes we take a quiet walk when church is done. Once or twice I have carried them to Westminster.

I am sure that you are wondering what my occupation in life can be—how I can earn my daily bread, and yet have so much leisure.

My calling is denoted by my dress, which is that of a nurse in a public hospital, a position for which I feel myself peculiarly adapted by my early experience and education. It is a vocation that gives endless opportunities of usefulness. "I magnify mine office." We nurses are not only auxiliaries of the physicians of the body, but we can aid the work of the Great Physician of souls. I am surprised that decayed gentlewomen of the better class, who sigh after conventual life, and crowd the daily papers with advertisements, so seldom make choice of this occupation. It is safe, independent, respectable, and responsible. It may be dignified by a religious self-consecration.

"That which does good disgraceth no degree," and the Saviour says—"He that would be great amongst you let him be your minister,"—putting honor itse'f on such an office, so that she who dreads lowliness need not be deterred.

I am one of the night watchers at our hospital, my hours of attendance on the sick being from sunset to sunrise. I chose this rather than day-duty, because it leaves me half my Sunday after sleep, to devote to my brothers and sister.

You will wish, I suppose, to receive some account of what became of me on quitting Sandrock. I will give you a brief outline of the principal events before I close my letter. After

leaving the post-boy and his chaise, I went on foot across the heath, I know not how. I must have wandered far and fast, for after terrible visions, which I remember far better than my physical sufferings, which were also very great, I was picked up by some people at the brick-kilns, seven miles the other side of F——, in the midst of the lone heath near Farnborough.

I there had a rheumatic fever. They did not call in any doctor. A doctor was unknown in their rude hut. These people had been born, and struggled through every kind of evil to which flesh is heir, and buried their relations in their time, without a doctor. No inquiries were made for me so far away from F——. No handbills offered a reward, and they discovered I had not made my escape from the county asylum. I heard them consulting whether to take me to the workhouse. Their principal difficulty was how to get me there; for the workhouse was many miles distant from their kiln. They decided, at last, that I should go with the next load of bricks that a farmer, called Joe Downing, might send over for.

I husbanded my strength, and before that time arrived, contrived one day to elude their eyes, and those of their old mother. I left behind me gold enough to pay them for their care, for these people, though uncivilized, were honest, and had not touched my money.

I dragged myself to a milestone on the road that crosses the great heath, and soon the London coach came up with its four horses, prancing and foaming. It was like a dream when the coach door was opened, the iron steps let down, and I got in. There was but one passenger inside. My appearance, I daresay, surprised him. My shawl was pinned over my head, and I must have looked not a little singular.

He offered me his newspaper. It was the 24th of April—I had left Sandrock in March. The young fellow was a medical student. He asked if I had been ill? I said “with rheumatic fever.” “My good woman, you are not fit to travel yet,” was his reply.

Something, however, seemed to win me his respect. Perhaps he detected a lady under my India shawl, for afterwards he called me “ma’am,” and tried to be very attentive.

The journey was too long for me. Before entering London I fainted away, and the young medical passenger did his best to bring me to. He felt in my pocket for salts, and found I had money, but could derive no indication of where I belonged.

At length the coach stopped. He was a good-natured young fellow; and I seemed to be thrown on his compassion. He put me into a hackney coach, and drove me to a hospital. There I lay many days hardly alive. When I began to recover my senses, and to look about me, I was greatly struck with the beautiful order and regularity that prevailed. Some persons who have never seen a hospital, fancy it an *inferno* of dreadful sights and sounds. It is quite the contrary. The ward in which I lay was airy and convenient. It contained forty-eight little white beds. Those in which patients lay dying and delirious were railed off by a white screen.

I assure you I would rather be a convalescent in a hospital than at home. Your own room grows so close when you are ill, and seems to contract daily. You weary of its monotony—you are cut off from your kind—and are tied down to an exclusive interest in your own symptoms. In a hospital, on the contrary, your attention is called off from your own condition; you are amused and interested by what is passing round you. If you have no friends to come and visit you, you nevertheless take pleasure in the arrival of the days when those about you expect to see their friends. The ward of which you are an inmate has its public opinion, its gossip, and its society. Your fellow-sufferers, even those to whom you never speak, become, by force of sympathy, your friends. Were it not for the medical staff which daily gathers round your couch to be lectured to upon the nature of your symptoms, a slow recovery in a hospital would be one of the forms of the *dolce far niente*.

After a time, however, cares for the future began to intrude into my mind. I was not very uneasy; I had chosen my path in life, where four roads met, several times before.

The principal physician who attended our establishment was a person I had consulted some years previously while passing through London on my way to S——. One day I asked him if he could spare me a few minutes, and the next morning he

entered the ward earlier than usual, and came alone to me. One of the nurses was about to leave the hospital. I told him I wanted to succeed her. I gave him as much of my history as it concerned him to know, and told him of the experience in the care of the sick which I had had in early life, under Dr. Glascock in Valetta. I allowed him to refer, as to my character, to the Vicar of S——, who I knew would speak as favorably as he could of me.

The result was that the good word of Dr. L—— secured me the situation I now occupy. I am trusted by the hospital authorities, and I hope I am beloved by many of the patients who come under my care. Many a one with his last breath has given me his blessing, and convalescents come often to my room to claim my interest in their little affairs.

I am happy, dear Horace. We who have no ties of family need not be destitute of other ties. Our interests are bounded by the universe alone.

Is man, the immortal, to have the life that lies within him necessarily limited and cramped, by any set of events or bereavements, or privations?

"All is yours," says the promise; "life, death, things present, things to come." In the face of such words can I say, *I have lost all?*

Yet, I look forward to death as the chamberlain of the Lord. Sometimes I think of him as transformed into my friend, holding out to me his skeleton palm, and conducting my weak steps into the presence of my Saviour. God be praised, this weary life is but a waiting in the antechamber! The Christian's true existence lies beyond.

I dare not send any message of affection to your aunt or to my dearest child—yet tell her always to wear the little ring I placed upon her finger. Tell her—I know not what to tell her—I have so little hope we shall ever meet again in this world!

You may tell her that the other day I saw her brother. He and Ned sleep in the same room at school, and are great friends with each other. Ned, who is not aware of our connexion, brought him here last week on a half holiday, entreating me to dress the poor child's feet, which were covered with chilblains.

I could not turn the suffering child away, but I told Ned he must never again bring me any of his companions. Nothing so painful as this has happened to me since I left you. I could not bring my mind to tell him who I was; but perhaps it may be as well Katie should do so in a letter.

Let us all strive for unity of faith, of spirit, and of purpose here; and hereafter, my beloved ones, there will be union everlastingly! "*Sur quoi, je prie Dieu qu'il vous ait en sa sainte et digne garde.*"

AMABEL.

CHAPTER II.

And is *this* like love to stand
 With no help in my hand,
 When strong as Death I fain would watch above thee?
 MRS. BROWNING.—*The Valediction.*

NEARLY two years after the date of the last letter, a group of our *dramatis personæ* were assembled on the telegraph hill, near Portsmouth. It was in the summer season—a very hot July.—Amabel and Annie Talbot were sitting on the close parched turf, without their bonnets, which were lying beside them. They were looking towards the ocean, watching for the first puff of the sea-breeze after sunset. The blue offing shone like silver, where it melted soft into the hazy sky, and right across it glanced a golden path, seeming to pave the waters to the setting sun. Light sparkled upon every surge, up to where the ripple of a sea at rest flashed upon the copper of the frigates at Spithead.

In the distance, indistinct at first in the bright haze of glowing sunlight, a brig and a frigate, standing in shore, were noticeable. The brig had the frigate in tow. At first sight, one might have thought that they stood still on the smooth silvered blue of the water; nevertheless, rising upon the swells could be every now and then seen, with increasing distinctness, the dark side and white streak of the man-o'-war, checkered with a

double row of ports, her wake gleaming white in the heave of the sea. The brig was a long, rakish-looking craft of Yankee build, painted black, with sharp bows. As the two women sat watching the slow nearing of these vessels, they were joined by two lads in midshipmen's uniform.

Never, in after life, does the naval officer feel himself so great a man as when he first walks the Common Hard of Portsmouth, with his new laced hat on his round head, and his shining middy's dirk stuck in his girdle. The magnificent air of proud indifference with which these young gentlemen acknowledge the salutes of the marines, standing sentry at the dock-yard gates, is unsurpassed for supercilious condescension.

They stood by Amabel and Annie, pointing towards Spit-head, and discoursing on the build and rates of sailing of the shipping. Having been educated at a naval school, founded for the instruction of the sons of officers, they had some nautical knowledge, of which they made a great display, spicing their conversation so largely with sea terms that their discourse was nearly unintelligible to Annie, who, though the daughter of a post-captain, did not know the braces from the yards, nor the fore from the after part of a vessel. Amabel was wiser. She cast an intelligent look out to sea, when, pointing to the brig which seemed tender to the frigate, they noticed the flap of her fore-top-sail, and said that the wind was drawing ahead for her, and it would come pretty near from due nor'-east before long.

These boys were Ned Talbot and John Warner, fast friends and schoolmates, who had suddenly emerged together into midshipman-hood. It was the close of the London season. Annie Talbot, who had been worn out with hard labor, had been ordered to recruit at the sea-side. Amabel (that quiet little brown figure in a plain white cap) had obtained leave of absence, and Portsmouth had been selected in spite of the superior cheapness of Margate, because it would enable them to see the last of their brother Ned. Amabel had not been aware that John Warner would be with her when she left London. John, however, had travelled down with her inside the coach, and treated her with the greatest respect and consideration. He

had received many letters from his sister Katie, on the subject of their step-mother. Katie, by the way, and Miss Taylor were in Portsmouth at this moment. They had come to see John off; and as soon as Katie learned from him that Amabel was there, she made many an attempt to meet her *accidentally*. And, therefore, Amabel, who thought it right that her life should be henceforward dis severed from her step-children, shunned all frequented streets in order to avoid a meeting; and discouraged, though she did not quite forbid, John Warner's visits to her quiet lodging.

John had a ship's glass in his hand, which he was bringing to bear upon the vessels, endeavoring to steady it for the ladies, who generally succeeded in seeing vaguely dim patches of grey sky; and who, when prominent objects had been sought and found for their inspection, contrived, before they got their eye fairly to the glass, to let the whole picture drop back into the channel.

"Dreadful dirty she looks aloft, John," said Ned, taking the glass. "Her ropes are all hanging about her yards in kinks. That is not the order I should choose to keep aboard a man-o'-war."

"Nor I," said John, taking the glass. "What a precious lot of old hamper she's got hanging about her."

As the boys were making their comments on these ships, and taking brief peeps at them in the intervals of fixing the spy-glass for the ladies, they had not noticed some men coming up the hill to work the telegraph; and soon the great unwieldy wooden arms were playing up and down in the light of the setting sun.

"What frigate's that?" said Ned to one of the men standing about the place, who had the appearance of a sailor.

"That there's the Alcastor frigate, Cap'n Warner, come home, sir, from Bight o' Benin. She have the black vomit aboard her. That there's her prize, a slaver, towing of her. They say she hasn't got well men enough on board to work her in. All hands is took down, men and officers, aboard her. They are dying off as thick as peas. The Admiral has ordered them to moor her off the Motherbank in strict qua-

rantine. They are working a message up to town to ask what's to be done about her."

"Do you know, sir," said John Warner, dropping his new-found airs, and flushing in the face, while Amabel with lips apart grew pale as marble, "do you know, sir, whether her captain is on board? He is my father."

The man touched his hat, gazed silently a moment into the boy's face, with a kindly look of rough compassion, then shifted his tobacco in his cheek, and looked away as he answered—

"I believe, Mr. Warner, your father is on board, sir. He was a fine officer. I served under him once, sir, in the Dodo sloop-of-war, in the Mediterranean."

"Was!" exclaimed Amabel, seizing his arm. "Did you mean *was*? Is he dead? Is it over?"

"No, marm—no, my lady," said the man; "only ill, marm. He *may* get over it. Try and hope he may."

Annie began to cry; not that she in the least remembered Captain Warner, or had heard his name for years; but her heart was soft, and her feelings easily moved.

Amabel did not lament aloud, nor faint, nor shriek, as the boys supposed she would, nor did she even cover her pale face, nor wring her hands; she stood with a fixed abstracted look, gazing at the ships which were coming to their moorings. There was something, however, in the expression of her face, which made John Warner pity her from his whole soul. He went up and shook her by the hand. The tears that rolled in silence down his face overcame her.

"Oh! my son," she cried, "is there no help?"

And the poor fellow could not answer her.

Then Amabel disengaged herself from all of them, and walked apart. As usual, when much moved, there came into her mind a text of Scripture. This time it was, "Gird up the loins of your mind—be sober—and *hope to the end.*" She took it as a message to herself—the voice of heaven in her heart, and she was comforted. In a few moments she lifted up her face—very pale, but more composed. As she stood with her back to the telegraph and her companions, she saw in the north-east corner of the sky, a small cloud rising with extreme rapidity;—

light, misty, and yet clearly defined against the sky, with three tall points mounting to the zenith—it looked like the distant shrouds and sails of some far off giant ship, or like the shooting ray of an aurora.

The rest of the party joined her; silently they hastened to their temporary home. Ned Talbot and Jack Warner took leave of them at the door of the house where they had lodgings, and promising to come back, and tell what further news they might collect, went off to make inquiries.

When they returned, they found Annie gone up to her chamber. The long walk and her tears had exhausted her. Amabel was lying on the sofa, with her face hidden in the cushions, weeping quiet tears. She wiped them away when they came in, and struggled to receive them with composure—

“The shade by which her life was crossed
Had made her kindly with her kind.”

It was natural to her to smile a welcome, but this time the smile yielded to a sob. Tea stood prepared upon the table, with cream and strawberries, but nobody could eat, and as soon as they had told her the little news that they had been able to collect, they went away a second time.

All communication with the plague ship was forbidden. Medicines and fresh provisions were to be put into empty boats fastened astern, and drawn on board of her. Theodosius Ord was in command of the prize slaver, and at present all his men were healthy, communication between the brig and frigate having been cut off since the appearance of the disorder. The surgeon of the Alcastor had been one of the first victims, and it was said the Admiral was looking round for a volunteer to send on board of her, if any medical man could be found in Portsmouth, who would cast in his lot with the plague-stricken, and devote himself to almost certain death, for the bare chance of saving some one life by his professional exertions.

Amabel heard all that Ned and John could tell, asked calmly where the Admiral resided, and dismissed them to carry their sad news to Katie and Miss Taylor.

At the door John Warner, whose heart failed him at the

thought of his sister's grief, turned back and said to Amabel—

"Won't you go with us? She is so fond of you? You would break it to her better than I."

"No, my dear boy, I have other work to do; but take her this," she cried, and going up to him, to the disconcerting of his newly-fledged dignity, laid her hands upon his shoulders, and kissed him.

"Take her one of my kisses," she said, "and to-morrow morning bid her come here to this house, as early as she can. God bless and comfort you!"

"I cannot make your sister out," said John to Ned as they walked on, "she seems to take my poor father's danger very quietly, and I should suppose that was quite natural after the terms they have lived upon for years—only there is such a look of suppressed suffering in her face."

"I know Amabel," said Ned, "when she feels much she never talks. She is gathering up her energies for something. When she takes a thing in hand, there is nothing she can't do."

Meantime, Amabel had sent out for a glass coach. In it she placed a basket and some clothes. Over her quiet brown stuff gown, she threw the soft folds of her cashmere, and put her bonnet over the close white cap, which in the hospital marked her position. No person, though the fashion of her dress was quaint, and it was made of rough material, could glance at her without perceiving at once she was a lady;—a *very refined* lady, the acute observer would have added, had his eye fallen on the neat black boot she set upon her carriage-step, or on the well gloved hand which rested a moment on the coat sleeve of her coachman. There was nothing French about her now, except a natural taste for such small niceties.

As she drove through the suburbs to the door of the Port Admiral, the storm that had been gathering, broke over the town. The cloud which had risen so misty and so white upon the clear blue sky, to the north-east, had gathered blackness as it spread over the heaven. To westward, where the sun had set, was rolled together a big black bank of cloud, glowing like copper at the top, or like the dull, lurid yellow light of illumi-

nated smoke, hanging low over a burning city. Of a sudden, the thunder broke with a crash out of the midst of clouds and darkness. Amabel started, and turned pale; the sound was so sudden and so near, that it seemed as if a thunderbolt had fallen; and then the long, low, sullen roar went booming over the water. The thunder followed close upon a blinding flash, succeeded by the rain, dashing, leaping, rattling, falling on the streets with a force more nearly like the dash of stone to stone than like the fall of water.

In this tremendous rain, Amabel's carriage drove down High street, and stopped at the Port Admiral's door.

She got out, and desired the servant to let her speak with Admiral P——. Her heart felt sick and faint within her.

"Papa," said one of the Admiral's young ladies, who had seen her as she was shown in. "There is somebody waiting to see you in the library."

"Who is it, my dear?"

"It's a woman of some kind."

That sixth sense, by which a gentleman at once detects gentility, enabled the Admiral, on entering his library, to perceive a *lady*; and he begged her to command him, with the ceremonious gallantry of an officer of the old school.

"Sir," said she, "I am connected with an hospital in London, and am experienced in fever. I want an order to go on board the *Alcastor*."

"My dear woman," said the Admiral, "I would not give you such a thing if I had it in my power. Her very timbers are infected;—her men and officers are dying off by dozens."

"Sir," said Amabel, coming close to him, and laying both her hands upon the knotted fist the old man had brought down with emphasis upon the table—"you *must* let me go on board. The only tie I have to life is *there*."

"Impossible,—impossible. We must not spread the fever. If every woman went on board"

"Oh! Admiral P——, let me go to *my husband*!"

"Indeed, I would," said the Admiral—"I would, if I could. But the duty of a commander, ma'am, is more to save life than to risk it. Who is your husband?"

"He is on board the *Alcastor*," said Amabel, evasively.

"Yes, but what name has he?" said the Admiral, referring to a list. "Maybe he is not ill. Tell me his name?"

"He *is* ill," said Amabel.

"I could not possibly admit you, ma'am," said the Admiral.

"Oh! sir," cried Amabel, detaining him, "not if I get a certificate from Lieut. Ord, now acting in command of the prize of the *Alcastor*, that I am a fit person to go on board,—that my knowledge and discretion may be trusted?—Mr. Ord knows me."

"No, Madam—no," said the Admiral, "I could not take the responsibility."

"But a physician," urged Amabel, "is to be allowed to go."

"A man is different," the Admiral replied. "A man's life ought always to be at the disposal of his country, but I could not expose a woman."

"Oh! Admiral P——, a woman is equally a human being! I entreat—I implore you," cried Amabel, clasping her hands.

All she could get out of the Admiral was, "I know my duty. I could not hear of it, ma'am."

She felt that she was breaking her strength against a rock, and rose to leave him.

The old Admiral walked out with her bareheaded, into the rain, and handed her ceremoniously into her carriage.

"Where to?" said the coachman, glistening in drenched tarpaulin.

"To wherever they let out boats," said Amabel.

The man muttered, "that he fancied no waterman would like the night no more than he," but drove her down to the Point. Here Amabel got out. Two or three old salts who had been lounging under the eaves of a drinking-shop, came round her. She offered them a high price if they would take her within hail of the black brig lying at the Motherbank.

"Couldn't manage it, marm, no how," was the unanimous answer.

"Oh! my God!" she cried; "my good men, the rain has lessened—it is going to be fine. Ten pounds!—I offer you

ten pounds,—won't anybody take ten pounds? My husband is dying on board the *Alcastor*, and I want to go off to him."

"No, marm," said one of the men, who had stepped a little forward. "There's none on us as 'ud like to go a cable's length to windward o' that craft, I'm thinking. I thou't you said you only wanted a bit of a hail from 'tother black chap as is lyin' in her company."

"Yes, that is all I ask—indeed it is," said Amabel, "I want a certificate from Lieut. Ord, who is on board of her, to show Admiral P——, and then perhaps he'll let me go on board the frigate, to my husband." The last words dying away like the sigh of a gust piping in winter through the trees.

At last two of the men came forward; and knocking the ashes out of their pipes, which they had smoked at intervals in short puffs, during the colloquy, and putting them into their jacket pockets, said, with many hitches at their trowsers, that if "beside the ten pound, the lady would stand summut to drink"

Amabel interrupted the speech by putting five shillings into the hand of the spokesman, and one of the party handed her down at once into the stern sheets of a small wherry, and stowed her "traps," as he called them, snugly in the locker.

She sat there slowly soaking, though the rain fell with less fury than it had done during the strength of the storm.

In earlier days she would have covered her face, and have lapsed into reverie; *now* she kept rising in the boat, looking for the boatmen, trying to steady herself against the wet piles of the jetty.

"Your *old men* shall dream dreams, your *young men* shall see visions," but the spirit of *action* is for the prime of age.

And yet what hope for her was there in action? There is an extraordinary vitality in hope—'tis the true Hydra. We are haunted daily by the ghosts of hopes, years after we have laid them with weeping and with mourning in their graves. She had given up the idea of ever being reconciled to her husband; she had even persuaded herself that such a reconciliation would not be for their mutual good; she had torn up

the desire of her life, and rooted out its fibres. But she found it living still.

Now all was over; she might see him,—die beside him—receive forgiveness from those tainted lips, the only reconciliation possible,—and after that came death. Her lot was sealed; she had no earthly future.

There arose in her soul, as she sat unsheltered in the boat, a self-dependent woman in the power of rough men, a vision—a prophecy of *a future that might have been*,—a vision of a sunny summer evening, such as never had been, nor could be, at the old Cedars. She saw the trim smooth lawn, the clustering monthly roses, the iron roller dragged by James, the gardener with white hair. As shading her eyes from the bright sunset she listened for the tramp of the horse-hoofs of her husband, she felt her skirts pulled by a rosy boy, the Leonard who lay dead under the yews; the fair face of Katie smiled on her from a window, and suddenly a strong, firm arm, was clasped about her waist, and her face was lifted up, and met her husband's warm, approving kiss, and happy, loving smile.

“Ah! backward fancy, wherefore wake
The old bitterness again, and break
The low beginnings of content?”

Her soul was stirred to its very depths. Tender recollections of her married life came in like a flood. Wave after wave of bitterness broke over her. She was off her feet as it were—carried away as by a mighty surge.

“Sorrow is vain, and despondency sinful.” “Even so,” said her spirit. “Forgive me, Leonard,” said the voice within, “forgive me the deficiency in courage with which I meet my fate;—forgive me for this weakness. My soul seems lost—adrift, under a dark sky, and in wild waters. Oh! Father Almighty! make me strong for Leonard's sake, that when we meet hereafter,—as oh! grant we may, upon the crystal sea before Thy throne, there may not be charged on him the guilt of any of my murmuring!

“Wilt thou not feel it, shame and grief to thee,
That I, for thy sake, loved less fervently—

Less heartily obeyed, less understood,
Him whom we then shall both acknowledge Good?
Thou hast enough to bear! My sins and fears,
My guilty weaknesses, and aullen tears,
Shall *not* be added, dearest, to thy load—
Aid me, for *his* sake, aid me, oh! my God!
To hope and trust in Thee!"

As she repeated this verse half aloud, the men came out of the drinking-house, and took their places in the wherry. They cast her loose, stripped off their jackets, dipped their oars into the brine, and soon the little boat was standing across the harbor. The sea was not running very high, the rain having beaten down the white caps, but the swell was excessive. The night was black as pitch, and the wind rising. Amabel, all alive to the present, had to resign the "bitter-sweet" of meditative sadness. All her strength and attention were required to keep herself steady. The little boat heeled dreadfully at times. The swash of angry waters on her keel was very different from the gently-plashing sound which soothes the soul in a pleasure trip about a harbor. Rowing was hard work in that heavy swell. Sometimes she seemed to mount upon a huge, smooth hill of water, dark as the night, while the light of their one small lamp fell on the bright wet oar-blades; a moment after she was plunging and surging in the trough of the sea.

They had taken a third man to steer; he sat in the stern, handling the yoke lines, and advised Amabel to lie down in the bottom of the wherry.

The men upon the thwarts, though apparently intent on bending to their oars, cast many a furtive glance under their brows at their fair passenger, and covered her over with their jackets to prevent her being drenched with the driving spray, for the rain having ceased, the waves began to show their white backs, as the boat went dancing over the surge.

The wind, I said, was getting up, and the rain ceasing; but suddenly the thunder was renewed; clap after clap, flash after flash;—a sudden squall broke over them. The swell washed over the gunwale of the boat, and nearly filled it with water. Amabel, upon her knees, kept trying to bale it out with a tarpaulin.

The oarsmen bent to their work, the faint light of their one lamp throwing its gleam ever and anon athwart their fixed, dark faces, with the steersman trying in vain to steady the little craft, and keep her head before the gale, which was their only chance of safety, though it should blow them over the bar. Suddenly an exclamation broke from the bowman. He had broken one of the row-locks—there was no longer any rest for one of the oars. In the darkness, the confusion, and the pitching of the boat, he could find no other, even if another were in the locker, of which none of the men were sure. At the next minute, a white and dripping bowsprit lifted right over their heads, and the hull of a huge ship, black as the darkness, drifted past them on a rolling swell. The bowman gave a sheer off from her quarter.

“It’s a frigate, mates!” cried he; “I made out her ports in the white line.”

“I’m blessed if it isn’t the *Alcastor* broke adrift,” exclaimed the steersman, “she was only riding a while ago at single anchor.”

It was the *Alcastor*, drifting before the wind, rolling her big black hull as helpless as a cask, now on one side, then the other, her masts jumping, yards and rudder creaking, the loose hamper aloft that Ned and John had remarked upon, swaying, as she rolled from side to side.

The terrified boat party watched the broad black mass, seeming to come out from, and to be a part of, the darkness, with a gleam or two from her galley and the binnacle, and fancied they distinguished ghostly faces peering above her bulwarks; though above the roaring of the tempest, the plash from the scuppers, and creaking of the timbers of the ship, no human voice made itself heard.

As the big ship drifted past, they watching her, silent and breathless, the set of the current carried them under her stern. A boat was towing in her wake, and they ran foul of the tow-rope, with a force which came near to knock the head off of the steersman, who was standing up, watching the receding danger.

“It’s the provision-boat,” cried Amabel, as one of the men

held on a moment by the line; "let me get into it—perhaps the people on board may haul me in! Dear—dear men, I'll give you all the money I have; only let me get in!"

"Pity she shouldn't get on board, if she's so sot on it," said one of them, as she pulled out her little purse.

"Boat ahoy!" sung out a voice from the poop of the frigate, not a full, hearty naval voice, fit to be heard above the battle and the storm.

"Ay, ay, sir! the Alcastor ahoy!" sung out the steersman, into whose hand Amabel had put her little purse, with the gold of her half-year's salary shining through the netting. "We've got a lady-passenger come off to ye, half drowned. Send down a whip and get her on board."

It was never satisfactorily explained how this order on the part of the Portsmouth wherryman came to be obeyed by the men on the poop of the Alcastor, for the orders of the Admiral had been strict that no one should go on board of her. I suppose, however, the boatman, in his hoarse tones, spoke with a voice of authority, and in the disorganized state into which the ship had fallen, with all her officers dead or sick, except her master's mate, and one small reefer, any appearance of command carried its weight. In five minutes down came the whip, with a small sail hooked on to it, "looking," as some one else says, "like a big grocer's scale dangling from the end of the spanker-boom;" into which, while the boat pitched and plunged beyond the power of the oarsmen to steady it, and in great danger from any sudden stroke of the loose rudder, the steersman tumbled Amabel, her basket and bag.

"Heave ahead!" he cried, and the next moment, holding on for very life, Amabel felt herself rising between the sky and water, at the imminent risk of being canted out of one corner of the studding-sail, or of striking against the stern-lights or the poop-railing. She was pulled in with a sudden jerk by several rough hands, and being landed on the deck, so soon as they could release her from the folds of the sail she stood amongst them.

The men drew back with sudden awe. It was a time of superstition. The hand of death was busy all around. The few

left were like the blades of grass that here and there escape the sweepings of the scythe.

Dizzy and drenched, she stood silent in their midst, holding fast by the railing of the poop, the light of triumph in her eye, a smile of thankfulness upon her lip. The spirit of love and faith had made her more than conqueror over death and all his terrors. They saw it glowing in her cheek—they saw it sparkle in her eye, as full upon her face, defining its sweet outline, and filling up its hollows by deep shadows, light gleamed up upon her from the binnacle.

There was dead silence amongst all hands on the poop, whilst in the white wake of the frigate, rising often to a level with the stern windows on the long, foamy, rolling swell, tossed the frail wherry of the watermen; and the spectral figures on the frigate's deck, who gathered about Amabel, looking steadfastly upon her, saw her face as it had been the face of an angel.

CHAPTER III.

We know not whither our frail barks are borne,
To quiet haven or to stormy shore ;
Nor need we seek to know it, while above
The tempest, and the water's angriest roar,
Are heard the voices of Almighty love.

R. C. TEENCH.

THERE was silence for some moments on the poop. The men all held aloof. The reefer nudged the master's mate to speak, the master's mate the reefer.

The big ship gave a sudden quiver from stem to stern. "Hold on," shouted the mate. Amabel clung with both hands to one of the brass stanchions of the poop railing. The officers sang out between their hands some unintelligible orders; the deck of the ship as she plunged into the swell, looked like a mighty slide; while swashing, dashing, bursting, came a tremendous sea over her bulwarks, washing everything before it, rattling like stones upon her deck, and plashing down into her

scuppers. Amabel was carried off her feet by the violence of the plunge, and having let go of the stanchion, rolled down the ladder of the poop and found herself both sorely drenched and bruised, struggling to catch hold of something fast in the neighborhood of the binnacle, while the roll with which the frigate righted, sent the helmsman swinging to the lee side of the wheel, the wind shaking her big frame, and whistling through among her yards; her bulkheads, timbers, and tiller ropes creaking and straining.

The noise and confusion about Amabel, for some moments, were more stunning than the fall. Before she had recovered herself, a man holding on with one hand to different objects in his course, came staggering towards her, and passing his strong arm round her waist, helped her towards the opening that led down into the cabin, shoved back the hatch which had been slipped over to keep out the sea, and put her down below as in a place of safety.

It was pitch dark in the place she found herself. She groped, however, for the handle of the cabin door, knowing well the ways of such places, from her long acquaintance with ships in earlier days.

It was dark, and choking hot. Over head, the noise, the creaking and confusion, appeared to be augmenting. Getting hold of the handle of the door, she opened it. In place of the rushing wind, salt and fresh from the ocean, there met her a close sickly air from the cabin, and the faint gleam of one pale lamp showed her the interior. They had got the dead lights into the stern windows, but nothing else appeared to have been made fast before the storm. Every loose thing in the place was heaved and tumbled into a heap to leeward, chairs, desks, trunks, and tables.

Making her way with difficulty, and with several swings and falls, she struggled towards a light in the starboard after-cabin. As she got close to it, and paused, holding on to the cleeted dining table, the ship gave a sudden quiver and a headlong plunge. She heard a voice moaning for water. The next moment the roll of the ship heaved her close against a door. She caught at the lintel to steady herself, and looked in.

Her husband lay moaning in his cot. The dim light from the cabin lamp fell on his worn, wan, sharpened face. He looked twenty years older than when she married him. All the little matters he had used in health, were strewn about the cabin. A few worn books were swinging on a shelf. His clothes and cap, trumpet, and spy-glasses, were hanging upon pegs. There was a small writing table fixed to a bulkhead, in one compartment of which were his chronometers. They had run down, however. Nobody had thought it necessary to keep the ship's reckoning while she remained in company with the brig in this distracted time.

The captain lay with his features in sharp outline; his knees drawn up, making an abrupt ridge in the white bedding; his head resting uneasily against the bulkhead. Some one had cut away much of his long light hair at the beginning of his illness.

"Water," he said, faintly. But the man who should have waited on him had disappeared; perhaps struck down by fever.

Hanging on a hook was a black bottle, made fast by the neck, and swinging with every plunge made by the vessel. How it had escaped being dashed in pieces against the bulkhead was a miracle. She got it down to see what it contained, and found to her great joy that it was water. Steadying herself as well as she could, she passed one arm under her husband's neck, and put the bottle to his lips. He drank with a terrible eagerness.

Even the clammy wetness of her drenched sleeves, as she touched him, seemed to be grateful from its coolness. He looked her in the face, as she resettled his head upon his pillow, and taking one of her hands feebly in his own, he pressed and patted it, calling her by name. "Poor little woman—poor little Bella!" She answered him by tears, and by warm kisses showered fast upon his hands and forehead.

But by the next things that he said, she found his mind was wandering. He had gone back in fancy, to the old Cedars. He had strong local attachments, and his heart clung to his old home. He wanted to know if all the hay was cut, and seemed to be planning improvements.

"There is a large dead chestnut yonder," said he, looking full at the lamp, "that ought to be cut down,—but the first walk I took with my wife we went and sat under its shadow; she was a pretty little thing—my wife, and she seemed fond of me."

Then as the vessel gave a sudden lurch, which caused him to catch hold of her, and her to cling to him, he remarked how wet she was, and again appeared to recognise her.

"Is this snow?" he cried. "Have you come from your river-bed, where none of us could find you? 'Commit his body to the deep,' you know—will she meet me dripping and damp in my grave under the sea?"

What a night! what a night! Sometimes the sick man had a snatch of sleep; sometimes he raved, and, when violent, a less experienced nurse would have found it hard to manage him. Sometimes he seemed to know his wife, and talked quite rationally; always, however, with an entire want of recognition of the real circumstances of the occasion. Sometimes he would call out for news about the ship,—and send orders to Ord, or threaten to get up and go on deck; or repeat scraps of the funeral service, which he had read over so many of his doomed ship's company ere they were dropped alongside.

Amabel, during a short broken doze he had, got off her wet clothes, and put on a white wrapper. She tried to reach the steward's pantry, but the ship rolled heavily and she could not accomplish it. So she returned to her husband's side, and sat steadying herself and watching him.

She sat quiet; strong in that self-reliance which hinges upon faith—and in the midst of danger and of death, joy and peace were hers. Her feet touched the brink of the river of death; but the past of her life—that fatal past—the monster she herself had assisted to create, which had so long haunted her steps and harassed while it could not harm, viewing her at last beyond its reach, ceased to pursue her. Her feet had glided swiftly over the last strip of future between her and the dark river. Her future lay in the mysterious Beyond!

Towards morning a man came into the cabin, who looked surprised beyond measure to see her there. She quietly accost-

ed him, begging him to fill her water bottle, and to let in daylight, if possible; adding, with a smile, "I am the woman who came on board last night."

From him she learned that the few well men who were left, assisted by the convalescents, had just managed to keep the ship clear of the land during the night; that they had passed the Isle of Wight an hour before dawn, and were driving and drifting in a sou'-south-westerly course across the Channel. He told her that when the *Alcastor* was cruising off the mouths of the Gambia, eighteen of the men had been attacked with the most fatal form of African fever. The captain had run in for a small port belonging to the Portuguese, where the plague spread rapidly amongst both men and officers, notwithstanding every attempt to purify the vessel. She lost her surgeon and assistant surgeon. Two thirds of her ship's company had died; some manned the prize she had made, which, under the command of Lieutenant Ord, was sent in company with her to England. Nearly a hundred of her men were left in a small fort near the Portuguese settlement, being ill or convalescent at the time of her sailing; and the small remainder of her crew, after every precaution had been taken by white-washing, washing, and fumigating the vessel, were sent home in her to England. When they were two days out there had appeared another case of fever. Next a self-devoted surgeon, who had volunteered into her from another ship, was struck down. Every day some two or three had died—till the frigate was left with a working crew of twelve men and two officers untouched, and fourteen or fifteen fevered spectral wretches who were getting over the disorder.

The man, with rough kindness, gave Amabel a little camphor bag, which he begged her to smell of, assuring her it had kept him safe during the fatal voyage.

"A little puff of fresh air will do us even more good," she said, and persuaded him to undo the skylight, and let the breeze freshen the close cabin. The skylight, indeed, as he assured her, would admit less air than water, for the *Alcastor* was still running under bare poles before the gale; the spray dashing over her from taffrail to cutwater.

As day wore on, the gusts of wind held off, but the sky continued murky. Once or twice Amabel made an attempt to creep up the companion ladder, and get a free glance of sea and sky on deck; but failing in the attempt, she was obliged to content herself with such a view of the grey heaving mass of sea and a firmament to match, as she could obtain out of the little square stern window.

What happened all that day above deck—what struggles the weak crew made to manage the ship that was running away with them—what deeds of daring may have been performed under the name of duty—what manly qualities may have shone forth—what powers of forethought and command—what discipline and obedience—I am unable to describe, Amabel remaining, as I said, all day under hatches.

All the time she hung about her husband with that soft, womanly, endearing tenderness, which all men appreciate in sickness, and the sailor most of all. She had a French taste for very delicate perfumes, and a fragrance of roses was always wafted from her fingers. The captain seemed sensible to this sweetness, catching her hands and pressing them frequently to his parched face; and seeming to be comforted and soothed whenever her soft cool touch freshened his burning forehead.

The heat of the cabin was very great. The wind that came down the skylight scarcely seemed to change or cool the air. She sat down by her husband's cot, fanning his flushed face, or moistening the fevered lips, now turning black, with precious drops of water.

Again the night came on, without her starry crown, clad in her deepest sables.

The captain was asleep—a quiet sleep; she had fancied there was moisture on his palms, and steadying herself beside his cot she knelt down, and put the *thoughts* of prayer, which had been her support all day, into words. “A word to God is a word *from* God.” It was not the first time she had found it so. What peace in the midst of that confusion—what light in the midst of the thick darkness of that night were poured into her soul!

As long as light was left she had watched the ship's white

wake running zigzag, far as the eye could reach into the grey heave astern of her. "The course of a life, with a distinct end and purpose," said her heart, "is like the way of a ship in her path on the great waters, not straight forward on her course, but with many a tack and counter tack helping her onward."

Maurice, the sailor, coming down to light the lamp, found her dozing about eight o'clock, her head supported against the bulkhead of the cabin.

He stood looking compassionately at her pale, worn face. In sleep it was not lighted with the smile of encouragement to others that in waking hours it almost always wore. In sleep her features took the expression stamped upon them by the tenor of her life. You read, as in a book, a biography of suffering. And silver threads already glistened on her forehead—that forehead which, in many a memory, wore the golden halo of soft light which crowns the brows of martyr's, saints, and angels.

The rough old foremast-man, when he found her asleep, gazed on her till a correspondent *feeling* came into his heart. "God bless her, and send her away safe, whoever she may be," said he, and moved off to attend to other duties.

As the second night of the storm came on, the wind continued to increase after a lurid sunset. It was blowing great guns by midnight, and the noise overhead, the creaking and the clatter, seemed deafening.

All of a sudden, just before dawn, the captain lifted himself up in his cot and seemed to listen. There was a moment's lull. Amabel's ear caught afar a dull roaring sound unlike any of the previous noises. Then overhead on deck she heard a hail from the young mate, too technical for her to understand, terminating in the words "*the breakers!*" Then came a rushing, scuffling, and confusion overhead. The men seemed to be setting a sail. But before they had well accomplished it there came a roar—a rush—a sudden clap like near and awful thunder. The dark clouds of the night were lifting, and looking full into the stern window was a grey streak of dawn, breaking clear to the eastward. The roaring sound had been the rending of the canvas. The sail that they had set flew sheer out of the bolt-ropes. Then came a sound of fluttering and crashing;

hoarse cries and hurried orders upon deck. The ship careening over on one side, till the deck of the cabin was at an angle of forty-five, and everything in it seemed tumbled into a heap together. The men appeared to be trying to cut a mast away.

Another shock—another crash; the great ship shivered through her mighty frame. The mainmast was gone overboard. Amabel heard the quick chopping of hatchets upon deck. She saw the spar, and the rag of the main-top-sail, drift into the sparkling foam of the white wake, with a drowning man clinging to the yard.

She shrieked and hid her face. She was ready to meet death, but *this* was terrible.

Captain Warner, too, had heard the crash. His earliest passion had been for his profession. He was a thorough sailor. Even delirium could not obliterate what to him was second nature. He knew at once that the main-mast had gone over, and sprang from his cot just as the frigate righted, after getting rid of her broken spar. Just then there came another booming sound from overhead; a flash amidst a steamy cloud of smoke swept back along the broadside of the vessel. The crew were firing minute guns.

Before Amabel could prevent her husband, he was making his way on deck in all the strength of fever. Just as he got to the companion ladder, his wife following him, a sudden shock threw them both back into the cabin. The ship had struck—the next wave lifting her floated her still further on the reef, sending her down with renewed force and a heavy crash on the rocks again. Captain Warner was in a moment on his feet; a man above, in answer to his heavy thumps, drew off the hatch. The light of dawn broke in on them at once, and the sight of such a sea! Foam, breakers, surf on either hand, and land on the lee bow and straight before them. It was a bold, bluff coast. They were so near inshore as to distinguish moving objects. The cliffs appeared burning with torchlight. Men, women, children were on foot, rushing hither and thither with wild, hoarse, unintelligible cries. They had tempted the ship to steer inshore by putting out false lights, and were now assembled to receive her.

Amabel saw at once they were upon the coast of France, probably on that of Brittany; for while the savage wreckers watched the ship with anxious exultation, a priest in his robes, his figure thrown into relief by the glowing torchlight, stood on a high point of rock above the surf, repeating aloud the service for the dying.

Inboard the eyes of Amabel first rested on the crew. Some were already lashing themselves to coops and spars; convalescents looking like the pictures of Lazarus out of the charnel-house, came feebly creeping up from berths below. Some, like Captain Warner, stood on deck in the fierce strength of fever.

The ship now swung from side to side, her decks working, her beams breaking. Fast on a rock, she lay helpless as a log in the midst of the breakers; the sea, at every third wave, making a breach over her, each time washing away some one of those on board. Their shrieks of despair, as they floated away into the raging surf, pierced Amabel's very soul. Meantime the oaken decks, an hour before so firm and tight, were opening and shutting with every heave of the tide. Some cried to God for assistance and forgiveness, other few shook hands with one another. Some tried to loose the stern boat from the davits, the only one that could have been got off, as the ship lay so high up in the breakers. In the bewildering confusion, Amabel, for a few moments, lost sight of her husband. All at once, just as she missed him, he reappeared suddenly at her side.

"Come aft—we have but one chance now," he said, and hurrying her upon the poop, he lifted her up before she was aware. There was a whizz—a whirr—a rush of air about her face; he had flung her clear of the ship, and then sprang after her. When she came up he seized her with a firm strong grasp with one arm, with the other he buffeted his way through the foam of the surf which was rolling inshore.

CHAPTER IV.

I would be thine !
Not passion's wild emotion
To show thee, fitful as the changing wind,
But with a still, deep, fervent life devotion,
To be to thee the helpmeet God designed ;
For *this* I would be thine !

FRASER'S MAGAZINE.

THE right arm of the strong swimmer sufficed to keep their heads above the water, for though the surf was running high, the set of the current, and the rise of the tide, were carrying them in shore. On mighty rollers they were one moment borne onward towards the beach, at the next washed back almost to the wreck again. But each wave bore them in a little further, till at last, tangled with floating sea-weed, exhausted, bruised, insensible, locked in each other's arms, they were washed against a reef reaching far out into the surf, where a savage figure, wrapped in a mantle of sail-cloth, waiting to fish up its prey, stuck a boarding pike into their clothes, and dragged them from the water.

The *Curé* on the cliff, who had his eye upon the prowling savage on the reef, saw him drag the bodies from the surf, turn them over, seem to search for any valuables they might have secured upon their persons, and well knowing that having robbed them, the wretch would either leave them senseless on the rocks to be washed off by the rising tide, or push them back into the boiling surf, he hastened to the beach at the head of a small party of *douaniers*.

By dint of threats they got the semi-savage, who alone had dared to tread the reef over which the tide was breaking, to drag ashore the bodies. Raising them with ease in his powerful arms, and throwing them across his shoulder, he came back along the reef, steadying his steps upon the hidden rocks with his old boarding pike.

The priest took them into his own keeping. On opening her

eyes, Amabel found herself lying under a cliff upon dry sand, covered by the old man's black *soutane*. Around her, men in wide breeches, and slouched hats, were talking a harsh jargon. She roused herself as quickly as she could, and starting up, cried, "Where is he?" Then seeing her husband lying at her side, she remembered the safety of others. Turning to the priest, she made haste to explain to him something of their situation.

No people have such an insane dread of infection as the French of all classes. The custom-house officials, startled and confused by what she told, heartily wished no other survivor of the wreck might get ashore; and by no means blessed the benevolence of the priest who had rescued these two persons from the tender mercies of Philopen.

"Is there no empty building here? No empty barn that we could be shut up in?" suggested Amabel. "It seems but right, if you will supply us with necessaries, that we should keep a quarantine."

"There is a *usine*—a machine factory upon the cliff," said the priest, "belonging to an Englishman."

"That will do," said Amabel. "Have him carried up there." And raising herself, she feebly walked by the side of the men who bore her husband. His fever strength was now all spent. His head and limbs drooped on the arms of his bearers.

Amabel could still muster enough of the harsh language of Brittany, to implore the peasants round her to be careful of her husband. *Her husband!* She had not dared to call him so to Maurice the old sailor, who had seen her in his cabin, but she dared to speak her secret in the unknown tongue, and repeated the loved name over and over. Her knowledge of their language won at once upon the peasants. "She is not a Saxon," they exclaimed, using the term by which they designate the English, "but a poor Christian."

The Breton peasant has a stoical resignation to the decrees of fate. These men were less alive to the risk they ran than their French betters; and partly through the interest she inspired, partly by the exercise of the authority of the priest, a sort of temporary hospital was established in the empty factory.

A few beds were brought in from cabins round about, and piles of sweet dry heather. One by one the ghastly bodies of the drowned were carried up to the factory, and some few not less ghastly living men were also brought there. One or two of the doomed crew came up who seemed to have escaped unharmed.

All at length who were likely to be saved were gathered together, and the *préfet* of the district, who had been summoned on so important an occasion, ordered the doors of the building to be closed.

From one of the windows, Amabel, after administering relief to the sufferers, looked out upon the sea. She saw it breaking, boiling, bubbling over the rocks that edged the land. The frigate lay on her beam ends, going fast to pieces. The bay beneath the cliff looked more like a vast inland lake than like an arm of the ocean, being shut in with mountains. She watched the sea birds sweeping over it. She heard them cry one to another, as they darted after objects floating on the waves.

As I sat on the deep sea sand
I saw a fair ship nigh at hand,
I waved my wings, I bent my beak,
The ship sank, and I heard a shriek.
There lie the sailors one, two, three,
I shall dine by the wild salt sea.

And she fancied each time that they swept low over the waves, they might swoop to peck the eyes of some poor fellow late her shipmate, floating swollen on the waters.

Below, upon the reef, were men and women, coming and going, each having his or her portion of the frigate's spoil. She thought of what Felix had often said to her, "that the milch cow of the peasant of that district was the ocean." Afar upon the blue horizon, where the waters of the bay joined the open sea, she saw the light white canvas of ships rejoicing in the lull of the storm.

About four o'clock in the day, the captain woke to consciousness. As his eyes wandered with a sort of dreamy wonder round the spot in which he found himself, and as he tried to connect his latest remembrance of time and place with the

strange scene, his gaze rested on his wife, and became fixed there. He had a vague impression of the events of the past night, and of her actual bodily presence; such an impression as is left on a susceptible imagination by a very vivid dream.

It was pleasant, in his weakness, to have her tranquil feminine figure within the range of his vision. He feared the soothing apparition would disappear. A tear fell on her lap. Just then she turned her face. He saw it full. A gentle, tearful face, full of a tender anxiety; upon whose lines one seemed to view the trace

Of old, unhappy, far-off things,
And battles long ago.

The rounded beauty of her cheek was gone. The glitter, glow, and sparkle of the sunshine of her life had passed away for ever; but the impression he received from what he saw was scarcely one of pain. Change he noticed in her face, but not decay. It had acquired a new beauty—the still, calm beauty of a summer twilight. A beauty so serene, that as he gazed, it seemed to send a subduing, soothing, holy influence into his soul. Her figure still retained its grace. The turn of her head, as she sat in thought, was such as could be hers alone. The sunlight fell upon her through a small *lucarne* in the rough wall, and the beams that played about her, made misty by the motes and dust that filled the place, made a sort of golden halo about her hair.

At last a groan from a sick sailor roused her. The captain watched her as she tenderly waited on the sufferer, writhing on his bed of fern and heather. Even to him her presence seemed to bring a holy influence. The captain heard him invoke heaven's blessing on her head.

As she came back to his side, he closed his eyes, but felt her cool hand gently laid upon his forehead. He *felt* the influence of her soft loving look. He *felt* her bending over him. He felt her long, warm, fervent kiss pressed cautiously upon his face, and as she kissed him, she felt herself drawn gently down—drawn down—and the warm fond pressure that she gave, returned upon her forehead. She heard him say some-

thing nearly inarticulate, but she distinguished the words "MY WIFE!"

Oh! blessed words! Oh! triumph—victory at last! He has surrendered to her love! Drawing her down nearer—nearer to his heart, she heard him add, "Can all the past, my dearest, be forgiven?" She did not answer him by words, but by the kisses that she rained upon his lips. Kisses fervent and ardent—the expression of her soul. He drew her down upon the bed, and made her sit beside him.

"To every time there is a season, and a time for every purpose under the sun." A time for happy, quiet acquiescence in the tenor of events—as well as a time for the exhibition of emotion. Amabel was afterwards astonished to find how quietly her relations with her husband had been altered; how noiselessly the crisis of her life had been passed through. The rolling surf which dashed her over the bar into the quiet haven she so long had tried to reach, had brought her in one moment into still and sheltered waters. The captain was too weak to make it safe, at such a moment, to excite him; indeed, the brain of man after emerging from unconsciousness, is more susceptible of sensations of complacent happiness, than of turbulent emotion, whether of joy or pain.

After a little time,—a little talk incoherent and happy, in the course of which he endeavoured to express how, day by day, by slow degrees, through no particular representation or event, but from the combination of all testimonies in her favor, his opinion of her had been changed,—confessing he had been unjust, pleading none of the excuses for his conduct that might have been urged—Amabel disengaged the hand he held in his, and smoothing his rough pillow, went off to a stove in one corner of the room, and brought him a cup of something she had prepared. She sat upon the bed, assisting to prop him up, and holding the cup, tempting him to eat, with a flush upon her cheeks, but triumph brimming, dancing, sparkling in her eyes.

"Where did you get this?—it is very good, my dear," said Captain Warner.

"Made it," said Amabel, with a laugh and a blush, catching his eye. "Did you think your little wife too silly to improve?"

Do you expect to find me still as inefficient and inexperienced as I used to be at home?"

"Ah!" said the Captain, "the dear old Cedars!—shall I see it again? If God spares us, little woman, we will go and live again at the old Cedars."

"Leonard," she said, after a moment's pause—"I have gained immeasurably in experience. I have grown quite an accomplished country lady. I can do everything to be expected of your wife, except electioneer."

In talk like this a happy hour swiftly passed. Then Amabel looked at her watch, which, though torn from her side by the wrecker on the reef, the exertions of the *Curé* had restored to her, touched the spring of the case, showed her husband the "Amabel Warner" he had had engraved there, and pressed the name to her lips, with a sigh and a smile. Captain Warner replied by kissing her left hand, which lay upon the coverlid, remarking, as he did so, and as she laid him back upon his pillow, how much too large her wedding ring had grown for her slight finger. Still holding his wife's hand clasped in both his own, he sank at length into a quiet slumber.

Amabel had not a great while sat quiet by his side, communing with her agitated heart, and wrapt in happy dreams, when she was roused by a groan from one of the poor fellows saved off the wreck, and disengaging her hand from her sleeping husband's grasp, "prompt at every call," she went up to his low couch, and found the hand of death appeared to be upon him. "If I had only the priest!" he said, in broken English. He was a foreign sailor—a Roman Catholic, and the thought of dying unconfessed, disturbed his dying hour.

The voice of the *Curé* was heard outside the building, and Amabel looked out, and told him of his penitent.

"I will come in and confess him," said the priest.

"Will it not do as well," said Amabel, "if you stand outside, and I interpret his confession? He can speak no language that is known to you."

But the *Curé* was not one of a class disposed to slight a duty. He persisted in entering the infected factory, and

though it would have been quite in accordance with the practice of his church to receive the man's confession in a tongue unknown to him, the sick man, finding Amabel could speak his native tongue, seemed inclined to retain her as an interpreter.

He was a Maltese, and had at one time been a devout Catholic. His affairs had prospered in the days of his piety; he had been master or patron of a *speronara*. But misfortune had overtaken him; he had been reduced to a mere fisherman, and had been pressed by the captain of an English man-of-war. Since then he had continued to serve in the British navy. The most important item in the confession that he made was a tale of robbery. It was the first sin unconfessed, and he dated all his irreligion and his fall from its commission. One night, while master of his boat, and running with cattle from Sicily to Malta, he had been called alongside an English sloop-of-war, and had a young Frenchman put on board of him, with orders to take him into Malta harbor. The devil, he said, had incited him, the prisoner being tightly bound, to search his person, and secure his purse, which contained so large a sum of money, that he began to be afraid that the theft would not escape notice if brought to the knowledge of the English authorities. He was tempted to cut his prisoner's throat, but was not hardened enough for murder. He contented himself with robbing him of all he had about him, and a large Spanish storeship passing him at dawn, he went on board of her, and delivered up the Frenchman.

"What did you take from him besides his purse?" cried Amabel.

"Nothing of any consequence. His papers I threw overboard. I kept a large sharp knife. He was a handsome young man, with a small dog."

"And the knife?—was it marked F. G.? What became of it?" said Amabel, forgetting entirely the priest to whom she should have acted as interpreter.

"I sold it at Cabrera after I was pressed to a young Corsican soldier."

Thus strangely Amabel learned, ten years after the event, the history of the tragedy of her early lover. She remembered that

Col. Ferdinand had mentioned having put to death one of two Corsicans, who had pursued him at Cabrera into the craggy hills, and doubted not that Felix had fallen a victim to the *vendetta*, that Corsican custom which avenges the blood of the murdered, by that of a relation of the murderer.

She had years ago acquitted her husband, in her heart, of all knowledge of the fate of poor Felix, but it was a satisfaction to her mind, to know, at last, how the sad tragedy had happened.

The poor fellow by whose confession she thus strangely learned the truth, died shortly after receiving absolution. When all was over, and the corpse was decently composed upon its bed of heather, she went back to her husband, and sat down by his side. A few moments after came a loud alarm from without.

"Open the door, some of you," cried a jolly English voice. "Open the door."

"It is one of the Englishmen who own the place," said the priest, raising his head from his Breviary.

"You had better not come in, gentlemen," said Amabel, going to the window, which was her post of observation. "Who are you? Who are you?" she cried, as she caught sight of the faces of two men before the door.

"We are relations of *Madame la Propriétaire*, who has married an Englishman, and are her agents on this property."

"But your names, gentlemen! Your names!" she cried. "Say quickly."

"This gentleman's name is Dr. Glascock. Mine, at your service, is Sibbes."

"Uncle Sibbes! Doctor Glascock! Is this fairy land?" she cried. "I am Amabel! Mrs. Warner! Do neither of you know me?"

"By Jove! I hardly should," exclaimed her uncle. "Open the door, Belle. Let's have a full view."

Doctor Glascock took her hand in his with the pressure of a vice, and trembled all over as he did so. Her Uncle Sibbes kissed her, saying that contagion was a humbug. And so indeed it proved.

They were on the lands of the old Karnacs; not above half a mile from the *chateau* of the Viscount, her father. Ferdinand Guiscard, who had visited Malta, and knew all her friends, had, on his death-bed, made a will bequeathing this property to Dr. Glascock and to Mr. Sibbes, to have and to hold in trust for the sole benefit of Amabel. The news of this bequest arrived as they were setting off for England. They had taken Brittany in their way through France, and were engaged in putting the property in order before going in search of the legatee.

They insisted on Amabel's going directly to bed in a neighboring cottage. In vain she protested that she wished to watch beside her husband. They said she had too long been independent, and must now learn to *obey*. They promised, when the captain woke, to move him, too, into the cottage.

She threw herself upon the bed of the peasants who owned the little hut, and fell asleep immediately. When she woke the next morning, after many hours' sleep, persons were talking in English in the kitchen. They were apparently at breakfast. She started up, shocked at her long repose; but nature had been exhausted after her nights and days of watching. As she opened the door of her sleeping room, the first person upon whom her eyes fell was Theodosius Ord.

"Where is my husband?" was the first question she asked him.

"Safe in the *Curé's* house, and very glad just now to hear that you were sleeping. I have been sitting with him since I arrived."

"But where do you come from?"

"My little brig was sent off in pursuit of the *Alcastor*; and, by the way, both Ned and John are here. I sent ashore for volunteers, and they came with me by special permission of the Admiral. I am going to send off a messenger to the Admiralty in about an hour. He is to take the *Malle Poste* at Brest, and get over to Portsmouth by way of Havre. If you have anything for him to take you had better get it ready."

CHAPTER V.

When seven long years bad comit end fled,
When grief grew calm, and hope was dead,
When scarce was rememberit Kilmeny's name,
Late—late in ane gloamin' Kilmeny cam hame.

Hogg. *Bonny Kilmeny.*

A BREAKFAST cloth is spread in the small parlor of a lodging-house at Portsmouth. It is nine o'clock—that most convenient of all hours for the first greeting of a family, and the first gathering for the day. Katie Warner is standing by the table, examining the columns of the morning paper with a sickening heart, and with a trembling hand. In a chair beside her sits Horace Vane; upon his upturned face is an expression of intense anxiety, though he is speaking words of hope—proving, as he has already proved a hundred times before to all who heard him, that the *Alcastor* *must* be safe, without a doubt, and all be well on board. Not that in his secret heart he believes what he is saying, any more than do those many friends who come daily to the house, and speak about the chance of Captain Warner's safety to his daughter. When the pity of the community is excited on behalf of persons over whose heads some terrible calamity is impending, the sufferer is always approached with words of hope, never, or rarely, with those of preparation.

Every kind of impossible conjecture was ventured as to the fate of those on board the *Alcastor*; every rumor that could be dressed into a hopeful sign was treated as encouragement. And, though there were moments when Kate and Horace could only clasp each other's hands, and mingle their tears together, in general they assisted the delusions of their comforters, partly because it is so hard to crush the life out of a hope, and partly because Annie Talbot, who had been taken home by them, on the first news of Amabel's departure, was so cast down and dispirited, that they were glad to resort to any expedients to give her a good heart, if only for a time.

She entered the room, pale and unrefreshed by her rest during the night, and held out her hand nervously for the newspaper.

"There's nothing in it, dear," said Katie Warner. "The good news was not to be expected so soon, you know."

Nevertheless Annie seized the paper with an eager hand, and as she studied its close columns with an anxious face, Miss Taylor came in to the breakfast parlor.

"Cheer up, my dears," said she, "Theodosius has gone after them. I am sure we have every confidence that Theodosius will do all that man can do to save them. They may have been dismasted,—may be lying-to at sea to put new masts into the ship; and you know if they cannot rig new masts they won't be able to get home very rapidly. A ship can't get along at the rate of many knots an hour without sails. Keep up your hearts, my dears."

"Oh! but they may be all dead," sighed Annie. "I heard Mr. Ord once read the Ancient Mariner; and I saw them before me just like that in a dreadful dream last night—the corpses swollen, with their eyes open."

"Don't you believe it, my dear. I'll be bound they are all well by now," said Miss Taylor. She was the only person in the group who really believed her own assertions. She clung tenaciously to her hope, which by no means resembled an anchor, but might rather be typified by a ship's wheel, which had as many spokes as there were points in the compass to lay hold of.

"Let us pray," said Katie Warner, standing by the table with the book of prayer.

There was no direct allusion made in the course of that home-service to the subject that engrossed them; but whenever anything was said about that confidence in the love and mercy of God "which hath great recompense of reward," Katie's voice became more fervent, and Horace's heart beat in response to hers.

They had risen from their knees, and drawn around the table, when there was a loud ringing at the door-bell; and the servant girl coming in, stated that a man outside wanted to see

one of the ladies. Miss Taylor went out, and, in a moment after, rushed back into the breakfast-room, holding out a letter to Katie, and throwing herself half-frantic upon Annie's neck with tears and kisses.

"Is it over? Is it the worst?" cried Horace and Katie in one breath. "God comfort us! Oh! Annie dear—poor little Annie!"

"It isn't that at all!—it isn't *that*! They are safe!—safe!—safe!" cried Miss Taylor, performing an awkward kind of war-dance round the table.

"Safe! safe!" cried they. "Safe—safe! May God be praised! How is it? Where are they?"

"You don't suppose I asked?" cried out Miss Taylor, as soon as she could be brought to hear. "He said *safe*. That was enough. I did not ask the fellow who he was. I took the letter."

Katie was standing reading it, with her lips parted and her face in a glow.

"Oh! it is all too full—too full of every kind of happiness!" she exclaimed, laying it down. And, throwing herself upon a chair, she burst into tears.

By this time the good news had spread, and the servants came running up to see how they bore it. Friends too, hoping to be the first with their glad tidings, were pouring in messages at the door.

Katie, again snatching up her letter, and pressing it with kisses to her lips, proposed to read it to the household.

"MY DEAREST KATIE:

"Your dear father is alive, and in a fair way of recovery. He sends you his love, and desires me to tell you that we hope in a few days to be with you. We have been wrecked off the coast of Brittany, where all sorts of wonderful adventures have befallen us, which I cannot now particularize. Your dear father saved me in his arms—and Katie, my dear child, I am the *happiest* of the *happy*!

"Your affectionate Mother,

"AMABEL WARNER.

"P.S.—Since writing the above, your dear father has waked up, refreshed and like himself again. He wishes you to get the Cedars in good order, and to be there, all of you, to receive us. In less than three weeks we shall be *at home*! Please to communicate this letter to dear Annie. Theodosius returns almost immediately to England. You will see him in a few days."

"Amabel Warner!" cried Katie, repeating the name over and over, "Amabel Warner! How well it sounds! She has signed it boldly in large letters. Theodosius will be so glad of this. Horace, in a few days we shall have him home!"

When Theodosius did arrive, he brought all manner of good news with him. Captain Warner was recovering—so were all the survivors of the wreck of the *Alcastor*. Amabel, notwithstanding her anxiety and watching, was in perfect health and brilliant spirits. They were to come home by way of Paris, where, to use the Captain's phrase, she was to be fitted out with all manner of new rigging.

Probably she was well aware, by this time, that a handsome *toilette*, lively *persiflage*, and a gay manner, were more suited to her husband's taste than pensive brooding over past grief or present joy.

"So little Miss Warner has come down here," said the wife of Dr. R—— to her husband, the rector of the parish in which the Cedars stands. "I hear the captain has taken back his wife, and is going to bring her home again. What had I better do about calling? It will be very awkward, my dear."

Dr. R—— having no answer at hand, and being unable to gainsay the fact that there was something very awkward in Mrs. Warner's return, continued, without lifting his eyes, to pore over a large folio which he had taken down from one of the shelves of his library.

"I was thinking, dear," continued Mrs. R——, who was overcome with curiosity to know what manner of things had been in preparation for a week past at the Cedars, "that perhaps it would be best if I were to call upon Miss Warner before they

come. I pity her with all my heart, poor thing! And I think the Captain is —— Well, I knew her poor mother, and should like to give her my advice. She shall always find *me* her friend."

The doctor having started no objection to this call, Mrs. R—— took the first step in the exercise of her benevolent interest in Katie Warner, and set out for the Cedars towards the middle of the day.

All was bustle and preparation in the grounds, where gardeners and laborers were raking, mowing, clipping, rolling, and bringing everything into trimness and repair.

Mrs. R—— was shown into the library, where she sat in the arm chair of her late friend, Mrs. Warner, calculating whether it had been good economy to cut up the old Turkey carpet in the dining-room, to fit the library.

Presently the door opened, and Katie came in tripping and smiling, with her hand held out, and many apologies to Mrs. R—— for her appearance, but she was "really so busy. Papa and mamma were expected so soon."

"Has your father entirely got well, my dear?" said Mrs. R——, quite stiffly, avoiding any recognition of the existence of a step-mother.

"Mamma writes word he is getting up his strength," said Katie. "Is not the whole thing like a miracle, Mrs. R——?"

At this moment Theodosius, not aware that company was in the house, called to Katie from the garden. She rose and spoke to him through the window for a moment, then turning to Mrs. R——, said, "You are a great horticulturist—will you give us some hints about forming a rose garden? I want roses of all kinds near the house, especially the old-fashioned, fragrant, Provence roses, mamma is so very fond of them."

"You must have a good memory," said Mrs. R——. "You were but a little girl when—when she was here before."

"Oh!" said Katie, with a look of surprise, "I have lived with her and known her since then, Mrs. R——. We were together at Brighton and at Sandrock, all the year before last, you know."

"Were you, indeed!" said Mrs. R——. "Really! How very strange, my dear! I did not know"

Before this sentence was finished, Miss Taylor hustled in, interrupting Mrs. R——.

"Mrs. R——, Aunt Taylor," said Katie, secretly ashamed of the crooked wig, the tumbled cap, the venerable pair of ex-white gloves, and the rusty, black stuff apron.

"Happy, ma'am, to see you," said Miss Taylor, rolling up in her queer way, and shaking hands. "Excuse my working dress, but I was just moving the furniture in Mrs. Warner's room. Kitty, my dear, you understand exactly what will suit your mamma. And about that picture with the yew trees which you and Theodosius Ord have brought with you, my dear, where is it to be hung? Go up, and see what is going on, while I sit here awhile and rest, and talk to Mrs. R——."

A week later, on a Thursday evening in the twilight, Theodosius Ord and Katie are walking down the avenue. They have given their last look at every room, the last touches to the vases of cut flowers, their last glance at the dining-table, set out with an unusual display of plate. They have entreated Annie Talbot not to suffer Miss Taylor to disarrange their preparations, and, though it is some time before the carriage is expected, they have gone out arm in arm to wait at the park gates, and be the first to give them welcome.

Theodosius has been kept in such an excitement of preparation, nailing carpets, hoeing flower beds, putting up window curtains—lending a hand, in fact, wherever a supernumerary could be employed, that he has not had time to think of sentiment—not retrospective sentiment at least; and Katie has looked up to him in everything. Miss Taylor's judgment was not to be relied on, and somehow Horace's opinion was of no importance when brought into competition with that of Cousin Do.

Her little hand is lying now upon my father's arm. He has put his hand over it, and holds it there. Her eyes are down-cast. Her face is shy and pensive. She is listening with a painful interest to what he says to her. She half feels as if she ought not to hear such a story from his lips. Yet she has confidence. He could not tell her what she ought not to hear.

He is speaking about Amabel;—the sorrows of her married life—the causes of the separation. And Katie pities all by turns. How can she blame her father? How can she blame the friend and mother she respects and loves? There is a little embarrassment about her manner; for she has two suspicions. She is beginning to guess the state of her own heart. She is frightened at a feeling she detects there.

And Theodosius!—can he have *loved* her mother? Is love never got over?—never transferred?

As she is so thinking, the small hand on his sleeve begins to shrink, but he holds it all the tighter, looking with a smile into her eyes.

They sit down by the gate, on the dry turf under a tall cedar. And still he smiles and looks under the bonnet which she tries to turn away. He begins to speak of Amabel at length as his first love. The little hand drops from his side. He is telling her all that I have written in the third part of this narrative, and Katie, trembling and tearful when he first began, gains courage to insinuate her sympathy, ventures to lay her hand again on his. There is nothing she can say, or that she ought to say. He takes the little hand.

“You are sorry for me, Cousin Kate?”

“So sorry.”

“It was a dark time, Katie, in my life.”

“Very dark. Only—may I say what I think—dear Cousin Do? Ought you not——?”

“Ought I not what? Speak frankly, Cousin Kate. Don’t be afraid to give me your advice. Go on.”

“To conquer such an attachment. It will be very hard, I know, at first. But strength comes with the trying. If you were to try, dear cousin—to try bravely. I *know*—that is, I am sure——”

She wanted to conceal that she herself had had experience in such a trial, and in the endeavor to express her thought without self-compromise, her speech became confused, and her words failed her.

“Ah! Cousin Kate,” said he, “my lips have poured into your ear this early grief, because no true man making a venture for

the woman that he loves, will put to sea under false colors. It is two years and a half since then. I have been thrown continually with you, dear Kate. For two years past I have been learning, sweet, to love you. We may be the happiest set of people in the world this night, and I the happiest man amongst us all, if Cousin Katie whispers what I want to hear her say to me."

"What is it that you want? I cannot tell."

But she did not shrink away from his caress, and her blushes *did tell* that she understood his meaning.

The grating of carriage wheels startled them both, and at the same moment began the village chimes.

"There is the gleaners' bell," cried Katie, as they both flew to the gate, "I forgot one thing. I should have liked the bells to ring their welcome. I remember when papa was married, he did not like it that no bells were rung. This seems a sort of second wedding-day. I should have liked to have them ring."

"It is eight o'clock, my love. The gleaners' curfew rang two hours ago," said my father, glancing hurriedly at his watch. "Some one, dearest, has anticipated your wish. They are ringing a peal."

At this moment the carriage turned into the gate and stopped.

"Welcome—welcome home, dear mother—dear father!" cried Katie.

Theodosius opened the carriage door. In another moment Katie was inside. Captain Warner was still very weak, and wasted almost to a shadow; "But, oh! mamma, how young and well you look!" was her first exclamation.

Amabel laughed, and shook her head; and said she supposed that Katie meant to compliment her Paris bonnet—but the glance she threw her husband, plainly showed that the secret of her good looks was a heart satisfied.

"Shut the door, Ord, and get upon the box. We will take you both home in the carriage."

But Katie caught a glance from Theodosius, and said, timidly, she believed that they had better not drive. I wonder which loving pair was happiest that night, my father and my

mother walking by moonlight to the house, or my grandfather and grandmother in the carriage!

Everybody connected with the place was at his or her post, ready to receive Captain Warner and his lady. My father had wisely thought it good policy to infuse as much pride, pomp, and circumstance as possible into the reception. Amabel's color was very high, and she trembled excessively as she got out of the carriage. Miss Taylor, Horace, and Annie were on the steps to receive her.

"Come in, my dear—come in," said the former, giving her a hearty kiss, and attempting to drag her by force into the hall. But Amabel disengaged herself, and going back to the carriage helped her husband to alight. With one hand he took her arm—in the other he held a stout stick to support himself. He required some assistance to get up the steps of the hall door.

But he was just as hearty as ever—gave the kindest welcome to Annie Talbot, and said more guests were coming the next day—Mr. Sibbes and Dr. Glascock, Ned Talbot and John.

Everybody who went into the dining-room when dinner was announced, felt as if walking in a sort of triumphal procession, escorting her to the head of her own table, her husband leaning on her arm.

CHAPTER VI.

Bide your time ; on a false step taken
Perils all you yet have done ,
Undimayad, erect, unshaken,
Wait and watch, and all is won.

'Tis not by a rash endeavor
Men or states to greatness climb—
Would you win your rights for ever
Calm and thoughtful bide your time.

WHAT now remains for me to write? Shall I take an abrupt leave of her sitting at the head of her own table? Am I to give her friends to understand that every difficulty was sur-

mounted—that her warfare was accomplished—that she had entered into rest—that nothing remained for her but to enjoy?

Reader, would you believe me if I said so? Was it ever so in life with yours or with you?

She found herself respected in her husband's house—once more protected by his name, but this was only to place her again on the right track; the dangers of her journey were beyond.

In the first place, now that she had learned to smile or to tremble in sympathy with Captain Warner, she could not be quite happy till her social standing was restored. At first the captain was too much engrossed with the novelty of his character as an invalid—with being once more in his old home, with improvements to be made, and his family around him, to pay much attention to the names in his wife's card basket, or to the state of the household's foreign relations. But Amabel well knew that the time must come, when her position in society would react upon her at home. She would so gladly have led a retired life;—would so thankfully have lived beyond the echoes of the rumors afloat about her, but my grandfather had a taste for social life—and laid, as she well knew, an undue stress on the opinions of society.

She used to lie awake at nights troubled by these reflections.

But as she pondered on these thoughts she heard a voice from Heaven. It came to her in church in one of the evening lessons—"Gird up the loins of your mind—be sober—and *hope to the end.*" It was not the first time these words had strengthened and refreshed her. They showed her her true position.

Think not of rest;—though dreams be sweet,
Start up and ply your heavenward feet.

And, like the weary traveller in Alpine lands, who sees blue distant hills, without apparent path or possibility of path across their height, swell from the valley; yet journeying onward, finds insensibly that he has reached their top through dells, and breaks, and gorges; so Amabel found many an apparent difficulty remove out of her path as she approached it boldly.

The very day after that Sunday, as she was driving with her

husband in a low pony chaise, they met a certain Mrs. G——, who had one of the best houses in the village. The many doubts and difficulties that were agitating the mind of his wife had never yet presented themselves to Captain Warner. Public opinion in the little circle out of which he had not emerged since his late sickness, idolized and extolled her. He pulled up his ponies, and saluted Mrs. G—— with his usual friendly cordiality.

“How are you, Mrs. G——? Glad to see you, Mrs. G——. Upon my word I find you looking younger than you did when I last saw you. By the way, when are you coming up to call upon my wife? Tell your husband I want to see him at the Cedars. When you come, come up so as to have some lunch with us. We want something more from you than a mere fashionable call.”

This unconscious sort of taking it for granted that the society about the Cedars did not mean to slight his wife, did much to make her visited.

Every day he grew more proud of her. He was fond of telling anecdotes of her, and quoted “my wife, sir,” pretty frequently. His affection and admiration for her were so genuine and spontaneous that they failed not to react on other minds. One by one the ladies of the neighborhood left cards upon her, heartily hoping, no doubt, that they should be out when the visit was returned. That was not generally the case. My grandmother and Katie returned all calls together, and the matrons who came nervously into their drawing-rooms to receive Mrs. and Miss Warner, were won by my grandmother’s calm, self-possessed deportment, and withal by a certain acknowledgment of manner, that she was grateful her claim to their acquaintance had not been disallowed. But what acted in her favor most, was the cordial affection evinced for her in every look and tone by her step-daughter.

For many years she continued quietly to win her way into the houses of the rich and the hearts of the poor. She was living down the stories once widely in circulation. She was giving persons something better to talk of when they heard her name than stale evil report. There were certain things she

never could be persuaded to do, however. One was, to make her appearance at the public balls.

Early in 1832, when my grandfather had that brief appointment to a line-of-battle ship, which he lost after the passage of the Reform Bill, the cholera appeared upon our shores. The principal families in C—— fled away at its approach. The town authorities seemed paralysed. The wise men and the councillors, on whom they were accustomed to rely, had listened to the entreaties of their families, and consulted their own safety. The medical practitioners still stood their ground, but were worn down by labor. Everything seemed at a dead lock in the city. Sanitary precautions, then so little understood, were almost entirely neglected. The enemy was upon us, and nothing had been done.

At this juncture my grandmother ordered her low pony chaise, and drove alone into the panic-stricken city. On her arrival, she proceeded to the house of the mayor, whom she found in consultation with a physician and some of the principal tradesmen. They were amazed when my grandmother walked into the midst of them. I believe she made them a kind of little speech, saying, "Gentlemen, this affair concerns us all. I do not live in your town, but am in many ways connected with it. In the name of humanity it behoves us to succor those who cannot help themselves. If we falter in our duty at this crisis, our own lives may pay the penalty; the pestilence is already knocking at our doors."

It was something of this sort that she said, and it made a great impression. She then presented all her balance at the bank, and with it—in her husband's name—headed a subscription for cleansing and whitewashing the houses of the poor, and distributing proper clothing. Whilst the timid were set to work at a safe distance from infection, to prepare garments and necessaries for those who could not afford to pay for them, she animated many a sinking heart by her fearless visits to the worst districts of the town, to which she went in company with the landlords of houses, and sanitary commissioners, whom the board at length appointed to have whitewashing done, and to examine into drainage. While these gentlemen

noted, estimated, and issued orders, she talked to the families, promised supplies of comforts and of clothing, strengthened the weak-hearted, and induced the strong to put forth all their strength in the emergency. The sight of a lady amongst them did more towards establishing confidence than anything else whatever would have done, and the cholera passed lightly over even the most squalid districts of our city.

A few months after my grandfather came home, and stood for the borough in the next general election. He laughingly informed his wife that he should not expect her to meddle in his canvas. Yet when election matters were discussed before her, it proved that the acquaintance she had made with all sorts and conditions of men during the cholera, gave her a knowledge, not possessed by any of the Blue committee, of a large class of voters. "If Mrs. Warner would see some of these men!" suggested several gentlemen.

Mrs. Warner had one or two talks on the subject with her husband, and at length, armed with a simple declaration of his principles, which were moderate, and with the strongest assurances that if elected he would advocate the interests of the town, and protect the trade in oysters, she drove over to C——, and went to call on several of the principal radical and doubtful voters.

She brought home two promises to vote, and many of non-opposition. The poll was pretty closely contested. The influence of the respect felt for her heroism during the pestilence alone carried the captain into the House of Commons.

Everybody knew she was anxious about the election, though after she had made her one day's round of calls, she took no part in the canvassing. Several young farmers stationed themselves along the road, determined, when the result of the poll should be announced, to bring her the first news of her husband's election.

The new M.P. left C—— the moment he had made his speech, returning humble and hearty thanks to his friends and electors. Accompanied by a chosen band of his committee and his friends all wearing his colors—blue ribbon and oak leaves—he threw himself on horseback and galloped to his home. No

sooner had he passed the bounds of the parish in which the Cedars stands—fully expecting he would be the first to announce his own success—than the bells began ringing in the village. At the park gates of his home, he was met and cheered by an exulting crowd, “God bless you, Captain,” said many an honest voice. “God bless you and your lady!”

Amabel came out to the hall door to meet the party, dressed in blue, with beautiful blue feathers and oak leaves in her hair. She almost always wore either grey or black, and her husband was delighted by the unexpected attention.

“My wife invites you all to supper, gentlemen,” he said, getting off his horse, putting his arm round her in presence of them all, and kissing her. “You must come in and drink her health. She is our best electioneerer.”

Captain Warner, M.P., was requested to be steward of the balls the following year, when for the first time, Amabel, secure of her position in the county, made her appearance at the assembly, with a large and brilliant suite she had invited to accompany her. She received most marked attention all that night. This first ball to which she went was a sort of little triumph, and it made Captain Warner extremely happy. On that occasion also she wore blue, with oak leaves on her dress and in her hair. “Were you thinking,” whispered my father, who was present, “that in France the combination of blue and green is called *prejugé vaincu*?”

The coachmen who drove the London line, no longer, when they pointed out the Cedars from their box, told, as they had been used to tell, of stories to her disadvantage. Or if they alluded to the reports once in circulation—(and Amabel had no right to expect such remembrances would altogether die away)—their mention of such tales was brief. They enlarged on her heroism during the cholera, on the affection and esteem in which she was held everywhere, or told romantic stories about the wreck of the Alceator.

Mrs. Buck, the housekeeper, had long since been removed from the Cedars. After the death of Mrs. Warner she married, and became the landlady of a small post-house in a neighboring village. There, rumors daily reached her, of the popularity of

the new mistress of the Cedars. In vain Mrs. Buek maintained that the good repute in which she was now held was only another sign of the degeneracy of those who praised her. Having moved into a rival village, in a rival county, she had no longer any influence upon the little place whose public opinion she had once swayed.

When Parliament opened, my grandfather and grandmother took a small house well situated in town, and began to give diners. My grandfather was liked in Parliament, and his wife had quite a success in London society. Not in the fashionable saloons of Pimlico perhaps; but members of Parliament and their wives, eminent lawyers, literary men and women, frequenters of the Athenæum and the Traveller's, army and navy club men and their families, composed the pleasant circle of which she was the centre. Her conversation was particularly sought by men of sense. The same power of sympathetic appreciation which had captivated my father in his youth, charmed and fascinated men of renown. She might have had political influence had she desired it, but nothing was further from her thoughts. Her intercourse with society formed a pleasant feature in her life, but her heart was in the *vie intérieure*.

One day after the Blues got back to the Treasury bench, she was conversing with the Chancellor. He told her that the ministry felt itself indebted for her husband's seat to her influence in the borough; and asked her, with a smile, if she had no personal request to make in favor of any friend. My grandmother hesitated. Her first thought was of my father, but he and Ned and John were in a fair way of promotion;—with a blush and a smile she asked for a better living than that of S——, for her old friend the Vicar.

Horace Vane went to Oxford, accompanied by his hard reading tutor. Notwithstanding the disadvantages under which he worked, he made pretty sure of taking honors. My grandmother had urged him to come down to the Cedars, and spend the vacation that was to precede the examination for his degree. He declined her invitation, preferring to stay and read with his tutor in college.

One night in August, she received an express written hur-

riedly by the tutor, urging her to come at once to Mr. Vane. She and my father, who was at the Cedars at the time, set off immediately. On reaching Oxford, they went at once to Horace's silent and deserted college. His rooms looked on the waving lime trees in the grand old grounds, and commanded a graceful sweep of the Isis, winding by college gardens and their learned piles. A soft breeze swept through the open casement of the room in which they found him. He had had his own bedstead moved into his sitting-room, and lay surrounded by books on every side. He was dying of rapid consumption, developed, probably, by over work, and aggravated by want of prompt attention. He was too feeble to converse much, yet as Amabel sat by his side during that night and the next day, a thousand signs of affection were exchanged between them. They spoke much of the happy meeting yet reserved for them in that world where all is light. Once only he alluded to the grief which had settled down upon his darkened life, and doubtless both directly and indirectly brought him to his end. She had reproached him gently for that too great eagerness for college success, which had led him to exert himself beyond his strength. "It was not that—it was not that," he said, a sudden spasm shooting across his face, as he took and pressed her hand, "but I felt the necessity of *work*. Something here," he added, laying his right hand on his heart, "seemed ever urging me on."

The second night he seemed quite free from pain. My grandmother sat up with him till midnight, and with her good night kiss upon his lips he fell asleep as soon as she had left him. About three o'clock in the morning she was called. My father, who had been watching with Horace, had suddenly discovered that sleep had changed to death. When, how, he never knew. He died without a movement—without any change of smile. He left Amabel the Hill Farm, which she has let to Col. Airey.

My father and mother went for some years to the Mediterranean after their quiet wedding. During the period of their engagement, they kept so much together, and my grandfather and grandmother newly reunited, were so all-sufficient to each other, that Miss Taylor, Dr. Glascock, and Annie Talbot were

left to amuse themselves. The old man took a great fancy to the latter. Cynic as he was, he always wanted some young girl to whom he might attach himself. By and by, for he never could do anything straightforward, he succeeded in alarming Miss Taylor on the subject of her health—she was always predisposed to hypochondria—and after persuading her to try the air of Malta, it was an easy task to induce her to take Annie. They occupied rooms in his house in Floriana, went with him in summer to Ramalah, and Annie was the Amabel of former days.

After a year or two, to the Doctor's great annoyance and regret, Annie married a Lieut. Col. Airey. The match has proved a very happy one.

The Doctor is living at present at the Hill Farm with the Aireys.

They have three pretty daughters, and Thomasine, the second one, is his acknowledged heir. He will be upwards of a hundred if he lives to see the marriage of this pet; but she comes less often than her sisters to the Cedars, he being very particular she should visit there only in the absence of her boy-cousins.

Amabels abound in the new generation; and as my grandfather and grandmother prefer keeping for their own sole use Belle, Bella, Amabel, and Leonard, we have been much puzzled to invent other abbreviations for the favorite name.

My mother would not call me Amabel, much as I know she wished it in her heart, thinking it a proper compliment to the memory of her own mother to give her name to her eldest child.

My story has described a circle. In the Introduction I told of my first arrival at the Cedars, the happy group of children who hung around my grandfather, and the reverential affection we all bore to grandmamma.

Four younger Amabels grew up under the shade of our old Cedars. Ella Ord, Mab Warner, Mabel Airey, and Amabel Bevis, to whom, on account of her quarrelsome disposition, the boys assigned the name of Bellona. I always thought it was rather a piece of impertinence on the part of Mrs. Bevis so to

name her daughter. Our grandmother, herself, did not regard it in that light, but readily accepted the trust of bringing up Olivia's two children who were sent home to her from India. Under her management they turned out well; especially Bellona.

As I sat beside my grandmother in church, last Sunday, thinking more than I ought to have been thinking at such a time, of the things that are written in this book, I was struck with the look of motherly pride with which, from time to time, she glanced up at the son who was with her in the pew—her handsome young collegian. He is taller than his father, with a sunny open brow; just the fellow to deserve and to secure a mother's strongest interest and affection. But I noticed that while her eyes were fixed on Leo, they suddenly filled as they turned from his bright handsome face to a plain white marble slab, let into the church wall over the place where she was sitting.

Sacred to the Memory of

LEONARD,

Infant Son of Captain LEONARD WARNER, R. N., and of

AMABEL, his wife;

Who died, November 27, 1817,

IN THE PARISH OF SELBOURNE, HANTS;

Aged one month and eighteen days.

CHAPTER VII.

The mellowed reflex of a winter moon,
 A clear stream flowing with a muddy one
 Till in its onward current it absorbs
 With swifter movement and in purer light
 The vexed eddies of its wayward brother:
 A leaning and upbearing parasite,
 Clothing the stem, which else had fallen quite,
 With clustered flower bells and ambrosial orbs
 Of rich fruit bunches leaning on each other,
 Shadow forth thee.

TENNYSON.—*Isabel.*

My pleasant task is over. I shall no longer, day by day, sit down to write this story. The last proof-sheet has been com-

mitted to the post-office. I am feeling the reaction consequent upon the sudden cessation of exciting labor. I am in a frenzy of energetic nervousness. I want to finish everything. A thousand of those things undone that ought to have been done, that ever accumulate around a woman of the pen, stare my conscience in the face, and demand my immediate attention. Meantime I am in a sad reactionary mood, with the apprehension weighing on my heart that my little book, which has cost me so much pains—has been so dear to me—has so many associations—and from time to time has been the pedestal of an airy figure

That Speranza hight,

—clad in a blue robe leaning on an anchor, will not be probably successful. What am I, that men amidst the shock and tumult of the terrible realities of life should pause and listen to my still small voice piping an obscure experience? Who am I, that in the midst of the fashionable Regent street of life, gay women should spare time to buy my posies; for, though pretty when the dew was on their leaves at early dawn, the flowers that I offer have faded in the gathering?

I am sitting on the cushioned window-seat of the dining room. The room is lined with oak; the dark shade of the cedar tree, that grows beside the window, throws solemn shadows into the room.

My grandmother comes up to me to comfort me.

“What, Lily! crying, dear?”

She has drawn me up into her morning room, guessing, I doubt not, exactly how I feel, and begs that I will read aloud to her. I have taken up a handsomely bound book which Leo has brought home. It is a volume of Alfred Tennyson; a poet with whose writings the rising generation in this house is much more on every-day familiar terms than its elders. She draws out her embroidery frame, and makes me sit beside her on her sofa.

As I watch her, calm, silent, industrious, and self-possessed, it is difficult to connect her with the events of her own life. As difficult as is it to connect a granite rock with the idea of molten lava.

I avoid the "Lilians," the "Adelines," and "Claribels" of my book, well knowing that the affected language of those poems will be more likely to strike a matron of her age than the picturesque effect of their word-painting; but I read her "Isabel," the poem from which the motto of this chapter has been taken—a poem I can never read without associating it with her.

Evidently she does not recognise the picture as her likeness. Nor does the poem greatly strike her. But as I read it, wondering what effect it will produce, a thousand reflections crowd into my mind. Has her married life been one of happiness?

So circled lives she in love's holy light,—

I cannot doubt she has been happy. Her Christian love—the fountain of that lovingness that waters her whole life, has made all round her green, and fresh, and fertile with fresh growths of human tenderness and love. True that there may be—there *must* have been in *her* tastes, feelings, and interests unappreciated by her husband. She is to him what books of holy lore are to the neophyte—a treasury of undeveloped beauties—a mine which grows more rich the deeper that you sink your shaft—a well that never fails in its supply.

She loves him. Deeply, truly, reverentially. The affinities that unite them are not of the intellect, but of the *heart*. The sorrows of her early life—her long yearning for reunion—the dangers she has braved to bring him back from the dark borders of the grave—her sense of the reparation that is due to him—her admiration for his frank, forgiving generosity, makes an equality between them that, perhaps, would not always have existed had these things never occurred. They are constantly together. In everything of one mind. She thoroughly understands his character—he appreciates without thoroughly understanding the varied excellence of hers. She is to him, indeed,

The leaning and upbearing parasite
Clothing the stem.

His interests are hers. I never knew another instance in which

in all that concerns the outward life, husband and wife seemed so completely to be *one*. And if she walks apart from him sometimes in higher realms of thought, she brings back with her so many graceful fancies, pleasant truths, and practical suggestions to beautify the life they share together, that her husband only the more adores and acknowledges an excellence which gladdens and adorns the common things of life—giving her richly all things to enjoy, and the power of multiplying Heaven's gifts bestowed upon herself by sharing them with others.

Finding that she did not enter, as I had hoped, into the spirit of "Isabel," I turned over the leaves of my book and read her "The Miller's Daughter." The touching sweetness and simplicity of that most lovely ballad seemed to produce on her a much greater impression.

Her needle stayed suspended as I read—tears trembled in her eyes. I was so interested in the poem and in watching its effect, that I did not observe I had another auditor. My grandfather had stolen in behind the sofa. "Read that again, Lily," said he, "read that again."

As I read the last verses over again, emphasizing them slowly, he came and sat down by his wife's side, and put his arm around her.

The kiss,
The woven arms, seem but to be
Weak symbols of the settled bliss,
The comfort I have found in thee.
But that God bless thee, dear—who wrought
Two spirits to one equal mind—
With blessings beyond hope or thought,
With blessings which no words can find.

He murmured these words slowly to himself, then dropped into my lap a foreign letter.

"Let us hear how Captain Ned is getting on. Read it out, Lil," said he.

"For shame—for shame," exclaimed my grandmother, smiling. "The letter is from you know who, my dear. How should you have liked to have *your* love-letters read out when you were young?"

"As to my love-letters, my dear," said my grandfather, with the tone of a man who dares to play with a grief that has long lost its sting, "we had been married seven years before you ever wrote me one. And as to being a young man—who says that I am not young?"

And young he was. Those happy, kindly, genial men who have taken in their early days the rough and tumble of a salt water life, often seem, as they advance in years, to grow younger instead of older.

"Oh! there is such good news," I cried. "Such good—good news in my letter. Papa and Ned are both on their way home."

"And what *else* does Captain Edward Talbot say? What more does he intend to do when he comes home?" asked my grandfather, with a meaning look at me and at my grandmother.

"Nothing particular," I answered, with a blush.

My grandfather was standing on the rug before the hearth, with the air of a man who in any room in his own house is chief authority, cutting a ball of his wife's worsted with her scissors, and whistling "Come haste to the wedding," with his back to the fire.



THE END.

